

The day of a godly Man's

DEATH,

Better than the day of his

BIRTH.

SHEWED

In a SERMON, Preach'd,

Feb. 25. 1722.

By *Thomas Foxcroft,*

Pastor to a Church in Boston.

Act. 26. 22. *Having obtained help of God, I continue untill this day,*

2 Cor. 5. 4. *We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened;*

Phil. 1. 23. *Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.*

Dies mortis, æternæ vitæ Natalis.

—Tunc summa bonorum—Nascitur.

Boston in New-England:

Printed by B. GREEN. 1722.

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By Thomas

Taffers to a Church in B.

And as a living witness of his

Life more eternal with Nature

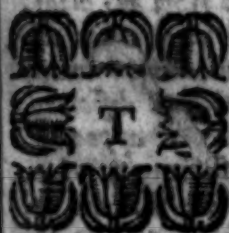
True living witness

Printed by B. Green

Elizabeth Leze



TO THE READER.



THE faithful Ministers of our Lord Jesus Christ are built on the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets; and are to be followers of them in respect of their Doctrine & Example: Preaching the great Truths of G O D; speaking His Word faithfully; practising agreeably themselves; and using all the wisest & best Methods possible that their Hearers may likewise be Doers of the Word. And as it was the pious practice of the Prophets and Apostles (many of them at least) to Pen and put on standing record some of their inspir'd Discourses (whether Epistles or Sermons) to their People; that by this means they might be able after their Decease to have them always in remembrance: So, it is but a just Conformity to those excellent patterns, when the ordinary Ministers of the Gospel do publish in print such Treatises as are agreeable to the Words of the Wise, those Masters in Israel, and conspire with them in promoting the same glorious and blessed design. And truly next to the holy & inspired Scriptures, those human writings are the best & most valuable (not which most abound with wit & learning; but) which are profitable for instruction in righteousness, & calculated to make men wise unto Salvation, to promote the Kingdom of Christ, & serve the great Interest of Religion: And when this ought to be the common concern of every Christian, how should (tho' weak) endeavours be to be desist'd, or if they must not hinder us from modestly & cheerfully using our talent and putting to our Shoulder, however impotent. And since every one's Opportunities of being serviceable are so very short and uncertain, methinks, this should quicken us to the earliest and most conscientious improvement of them, as becomes those that expect ere long to give up a solemn Account to the Judge of all. I shall not therefore (tho' some probably may think there is occasion enough for it) make Apologies for this or other Publications of mine: at any time I know it is almost pass'd into a Proverb, That Authors

are fond of their own performances; and it may be not unjustly fear'd, too many write more to spread their own fame, than to advance the Reader's profit; loving the praise of man, rather than the praise of God. But I can truly say, as I have not the vanity to wish or hope to obtain Applause by any Performances of mine; so much less can it be suppos'd, I am act'd by such a view, in offering to the Publick the following plain practical Sermon; (Meditated with a special reference to some personal circumstances of my own, tho' accomodated also to further the common Edification) drawn up in a very small time, without the least expectation of it's appearing in Print, and now Published from my original untranscribed Notes, (with only some few Additions, especially towards the end) whence it must needs be attended with many defects and disadvantages. It is therefore not without some difficulty, that I suffer so hasty a production, thus unfinish'd, to appear abroad in this curious (I had almost said, censorious) Age. However I shall forbear making many excuses, since it is not design'd to gratify the Curiosity of the Vain, but chiefly to help the Faith & Joy of the humble; and lest I should reproach the judgment of such as have been solicitous, it might see the light; as on the other hand, I have forborn making many Alterations, either as to method or language where it might seem proper, lest I should by any means hurt the Edification of such as were profited by it in the Preaching. I hope the Reader's Benefit is what I consult and really value, above the Writer's Credit; and chuse rather to incur the expected censure of captious Criticks, than any way disoblige my pious Friends, who see meet to testify to the World their generous approbation of a plain Discourse. Blessed be G O D, who was pleas'd to own it, & give it any acceptance and influence, when deliver'd from the Pulpit! May the same Divine Blessing (which alone can give the Increase) still follow it, now 'tis Published from the Press; that the good impressions felt in the hearing, may be renew'd and increas'd in the Reading; and that it may become more diffusively beneficial by it's more Publick Appearance. In which petitions, I intreat every Christian, into whose hands it may fall, to unite their hearty importunities; and to strive together with me in Prayers to G O D, for me: who am the least in my Father's house; and less than

The least of all Saints,

Boston, March

3th

1722

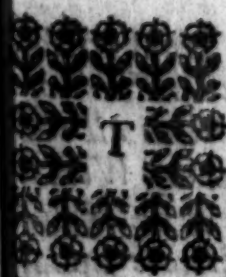
T. Foxcroft.



The day of a godly Man's
DEATH,
Better than the day of his
BIRTH.

ECCL. VII. I.

*A good Name is better than precious Oyntment:
and the day of Death, than the day of
one's Birth.*

 **T**HE main scope of the *royal Preacher*
in this sacred book (written in his
advanc'd years, and the product of
great thought, as well as long experi-
ment) is to correct many false
sentiments, too common, tho' very
foolish, concerning the chief good,
and the way to human happiness; and to give us
plain and infallible direction in this great pursuit.
Here

Here he has laid together an admirable variety of just & wise & useful observations; many of which run counter to some of the receiv'd Notions of Mankind, and at first view do not a little surprize and shock our Minds; but upon an impartial consideration they approve themselves to our enlighten'd reason, and challenge our belief & entertainment of them, as *true and faithful sayings*. He largely and clearly proves the vanity of this World; the vile-ness of Sin; the wisdom, excellency & manifold advantages of Religion, and the necessity of being religious in order to being happy.

THUS in our Text, He observes to us, that "the
*"honour of virtue is preferable to all the enjoy-
 "ments of this World: and that going out
 Henry, "of this World is to the godly Man a
 in loc. "greater kindness, than his coming into
 "the World was.*

A good Name is better than precious Oynment: Under this phrase here of *precious Oynment*, are comprehended all the *riches, pleasures, & honours* of the present World. In a *good Name* is imply'd true *solid religion*; the reality, as well as a reputation for it.

AND the Words carry in them this great truth, That a *deserved good Name, or just character for wisdom & piety, is really more valuable, than all the pomp, & pleasures, & profits of this transitory World.* A *good Name* is what all, that have any sense of decency or humanity, do put a *high estimate* upon, and rate even next unto *Life*: but to *deserve* a good Name is in truth *more* to be valu'd & desir'd than *Life* itself. To be *divinely wise & Good*, is un-
 813H speakably

speakingly better, than to be worldly great & rich. Wisdom & Goodness are *essential* to our true happiness; but wealth & grandeur are not. The meanest Beggar, that hath, and meriteth a good Name, is infinitely happier, than the greatest Monarch upon Earth without it. Indeed the unthinking part of Mankind do call the proud happy: and there is a vulgar saying, *Better be happy than wise*; but this is none of Solomon's Proverbs; for he tells us, *Wisdom is the principal thing*; and *Better* (says he) *is a poor and wise Child, than an old & foolish King*, however great in dignity, or mighty in power. The good Man finds in the ways of religion the most solid pleasures, & obtains the truest honours, and durable riches. He is rich towards GOD, a Favourite of Heaven, & entitled to an *Inheritance in Light*, a Kingdom of Glory; and when call'd out of this World, receives an *open and abundant entrance* thereinto. He then leaves behind him the *Memory of the Just*, which is *blessed*: He leaves his deceased body to take it's sweet rest in the unactive and impassible Grave, as in a bed of ease and honor, till the bright Morning of the Resurrection; while his *better part*, the immortal Spirit within him, in the moment of his dissolution returns to GOD, it's great Creator, Redeemer & Judge; into whose hand the departing Saint resign'd it, and by whom it is received to Glory.

HENCE from these blessed prospects of faith, the wise Preacher adds that noble passage, (the latter clause in our Text, and which only is design'd to employ our present Meditations,) — *The day of Death is better than the day of one's Birth.* He speaks

speaks of bodily Death, and of natural Birth. He sets these two *extreme* points, *one over against the other*, without regarding the *intermediate* space; as if there was no more in the World, (so vain a thing he judg'd it,) but a *time to be born*, and a *time to die*. And (which is a paradox to foolish Sensualists) the *latter* he votes the more happy period. Not indeed that *Death* merely in a *natural & irrelative* sense, is better than one's nativity. Nor that it is preferable with respect to *all* men, the bad as well as good: No; for to the *wicked*, *Death is the King of Terrors*; the beginning of never-ending Sorrows; the dark entry, into blackness of darkness; the wages of Sin, and the gate of Hell. As for them that *die in their sins*, it were better for such, if they had never been born.--- The Expression then must be understood in a *restrain'd* and *qualified* sense. It is not every one, but the *godly man* alone, that is here spoken of, the man of a good Name, the man of Wisdom. The Day of such an one's death, is better to him, than the Day of his Birth. "Tho' as to *others* there was Joy when a Child was born into the World; Henry, in loc. "and where there is *Death* there is Lamentation; yet as to *our selves* (that are call'd to die) if we have so liv'd as truly to merit a good Name, the day of our Death is better than the day of our Birth.

This then is the Lesson of Wisdom, now to be explain'd and apply'd; viz.

THAT to a godly Person, the day of his Death, is (all things consider'd) abundantly better, than the day of his Birth.

DEATH

DEATH in a *physical* consideration is a dissolution of the vital union between Soul & Body; and so is a terrible *Evil*, very shocking to humane nature. And it is yet *much more* horrible, consider'd in a *theological* sense, as a *fruit of the curse* and the *wages of sin*. Absolutely & simply consider'd, It is an evil, and an awful rebuke to mankind, having no goodness or worth in it. But *relatively* to *Believers* and in respect of the consequent state which 'tis a preface to, it's formidable aspect is *chang'd*, & of an *enemy* it becomes a *friend*: the *curse* being happily converted into a *blessing*. So that for the *Believer to die, is Gain*. The *wicked* indeed are great *losers*; but the *godly* are unspeakable *gainers* by their dissolution. The advantages that accrue to them by Death, are infinitely preferable to those which come to them by their Birth, and in their Life here.

THIS assertion in the Text is *contrary* indeed to the opinion of almost all mankind, who look upon the day of *birth* as a day of *joy & gladness*, and celebrate their own or Childrens and Friends birth-days with solemn feasts & rejoycings: whereas they look on the day of *death* Pool in loc. as a *melancholy mournful* time, and solemnize the funerals of others with all expressions of sorrow, and entertain the prospect & approach of their own Death with *fear and trembling*.

HOWEVER it is a *truth* with respect to the *Children of God*, that their *Death-day* is infinitely preferable to their *Birth-day*, all Circumstances and Consequences of both consider'd: and this will evidently appear, if we run the comparison in a few particulars; all which I shall reduce under these two general heads:

B

I. DEATH

1. **DEATH** delivers the Saints from those many *Evils*, which their birth was accompany'd with, or laid them open unto.

2. **AT** Death the Saints exchange the *Goods* of the present life & world (which their birth enter'd them into) for infinitely better Enjoyments.

I. AT Death the Saints are deliver'd from the many *Evils*, which their birth was accompany'd with, or opened the way unto. The day of death puts an end to all those sufferings & miseries, which their birth was the introduction to, or attended with.

1. **THEY** were born in Sin: but at Death they are discharg'd from all sin & moral pollution. The Saints were born in sin, as well as others. Hence that Confession of the *Psalmist*, the man after **GOD's** own heart, in *Psal. 51. 5.* *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.* And agreeably we read, in *Ezek. 16. 3, &c.* Thus saith the Lord to Jerusalem, Thy birth and thy nativity is of the Land of Canaan, thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite. And as for thy nativity, in the day that thou wast born —, thou wast cast out in the open field, to the loathing of thy person, — polluted in thine own blood, — And now this moral pollution adheres in part even to the Regenerate, so long as they continue in this life. Hence that groan and exclamation of the Apostle, (personating the Saint, as he is generally understood) *Rom. 7. 24.* *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!* — In Regeneration there is a mortal wound given to this body of Sin in the Elect; but still the Principle remains in them; all their life-long they find a

law of sin in their members, warring against the law of holiness in their minds; and after all their weeping and praying and striving against sin, they can't get rid of this vexatious In-mate, while in the present world: Yea, they are often led aside, and led captive by this Enemy and Traitor within. *There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not: but in many things they all offend; & even when they would do good, evil is present with them.*

BUT what a happy Change will Death infer! Death will discharge Believers from all the remains of Sin in them, will purge out every corruption, and perfectly mortify every lust; and will bring them under a blessed Impeccability, or a happy necessity of being completely holy. Death dissolves the earthly Tabernacle, and so it is cleansed wholly from the Leprosy that was cleaving to it. The body of sin is left behind with the body of flesh. After Death the Believer shall be perfectly sinless, spotless, and unblemishable. There shall not be the least possible vanity in his thoughts, or irregularity in his will, or taint in his affections, either with respect to GOD or Creatures.

AND this surely argues the day of the Believer's death, to be better than the day of his birth. For Sin is the worst of Evils; most subversive of the perfection of our nature, and destructive of our real happiness. It is then a blessed and glorious Change which is made at Death, and of ineffable advantage to the Believer; when he is deliver'd from this pernicious evil.

2. THEY were born in a state of Ignorance and Darkness; but none of this shall remain after Death.

Man is born as the wild Asses Colt; without understanding, like the Beasts, which perish; without the knowlege of the Holy One; having his mind darkned, and his eyes blinded by the God of this World, the Prince of darknes, that ruleth in the hearts of the Children of disobedience. This is man's natural state. Now in *Conversion* the Elect are deliver'd out of the *Kingdom of darknes*, and bro't into *marvellous light*. The eyes of their understandings are open'd, and the rays of divine Discoveries shine into them. They are made to know GOD, and JESUS CHRIST whom he has sent; and have reveal'd to them many mysteries of the Kingdom; which things are *spiritually discerned* by them and by none else. However their *Knowlege*, as well as *Holiness*, in this life is very *imperfect*. But in the life *that is to come*, their *Knowlege* shall be infinitely elevated. 1 Cor. 13. 9,---12. *For we know in part, and we prophesie in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.* The most knowing Saints in this world, are but *Children in understanding*. There are a great many things which they are *utterly ignorant of*. A great many things which they know, not the particular *reasons* nor the *special ends* of; and a great many things which they know not the *modus* or *manner* of. And the knowlege, which they have of any thing, is as to

the degree very imperfect, scanty, and shallow. It is of short compass; and little depth. But in the future State, their knowlege shall be perfected, when the eyes of their bodies shall be clos'd, the eyes of their Souls will be open'd; all clouds shall flie away, all scales fall off; and no ignorance, darkness, doubt, or error about any thing, remain in their illuminated understandings. This World lies in darkness; But Heaven is a Land of Light, glorious Light. There the Saints shall see clearly into all the Secrets of Nature, the Riddles of Providence, the Depths of Satan, the Mysteries of Godliness, the Wonders of redeeming love, and the hidden things of the invisible Regions. They shall have bright manifestations and disclosures made to them of the Divine Nature, Perfections, Persons, Works, &c. and perhaps of many more Attributes, as well as Works, than now we have any notice of. When the Saints die, they as 'twere pass out of obscure darkness into the open light, most sweet and pleasant. A far more glorious change they feel, than the man born blind perceiv'd, whose eyes our Saviour open'd, to behold the Heavens and the Earth, with all their glories and pleasantries, which he never before had seen. The light arises to them with a ravishing lustre, beauty, and surprise; it breaks forth as the morning (after a black and stormy night) fair and without a cloud; and shining brighter and brighter, to the perfect day of the Resurrection: when it shall receive astonishing advances; the light of the moon becoming as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun, becoming seven fold, as the light of seven days. As much then

then as Light excelleth darkness ; so much doth the day of a godly man's death, excell the day of his birth.

3. *THEY were born under the Wrath of GOD, and in a state of Condemnation : but they die in the Favour of GOD, and in a state of Justification.* They were by nature Children of wrath, even as others, Eph. 2. 3. The whole world is guilty before GOD. All mankind are born under the Sentence of death, under the curse of the divine Law, liable to the severest strokes of GOD's revenging Justice, and being the just objects of his utter abhorrence ; having all his Attributes armed in opposition to them, cloth'd with vengeance, and looking with an angry menacing eye upon them.

BUT now Believers (*being found in Christ, not having on their own righteousness, but that which is of God by faith*) die in the embraces of divine kindness. They fall asleep in Jesus : They die therefore in a justified estate, free from the condemning power of the law, and interested in the special favour of GOD ; being the heirs of his love, as a reconciled Father, having the glad some light of his Countenance (many times *sensibly*) shining into their Souls ; and every Divine Attribute speaking peace, and sweetly smiling upon them. As much then as the Favour of GOD (*which is better than life,*) is more desirable than his Wrath, (*which is worse than death,*) so much preferable is the day of a Believer's death to the day of his birth.

4. *THEY were born in a state of bondage and servitude : They die in a state of liberty and triumph.* Sin has degraded and sunk men into a state of the

vilest

vilest slavery & most ignominious drudgery. They are the *born-slaves of Satan*, he rules in their hearts, and leads them captive in their natural Condition at his will. *Satan* conquer'd *Adam* in Paradise : and all his natural Posterity are therefore by *right of conquest* under his dominion : And Oh ! *what more deplorable calamity*, than to be under bondage to Satan, our *great Adversary* ? What worse plague than to be slaves to him, who was a *murderer from the beginning* ; to be under the power of this evil one, this bloody Tyrant, whose mercies are cruelty, whose whole aim and endeavour is to plunge us into the depths of woe and misery ; and who is exceeding subtil, deceitful and powerful, as well as implacably malicious, and indefatigably industrious in pursuing his accursed designs ? *O wretched men that we are, who shall deliver us ! I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who giveth his saints the victory.* In regeneration the Elect are *deliver'd from the power of Satan*, rescu'd from the captive-chains he has put upon them, and are no more led and govern'd by him at his pleasure. However while in this world, he manages a *war* against them, and uses all possible artifices to reduce them under his dominion, and enslave them again in the bond of Iniquity. And sometimes he miserably *foils & wounds* them, and occasions 'em no little difficulty and disturbance.

BUT when *Death comes*, then the Saints are *smiſt* from their warfare, discharg'd from all their spiritual conflicts, *made free indeed by the Son of God* : and enter upon a state of *triumph* ; where they carry *Palms of victory* in their hands, and wear

wear glittering Crowns of Glory on their heads and are at an infinite distance from all possible injurious influences or assaults of the malignant Powers of Hell and Earth. No fiery dart can reach & annoy them; nor any venomous Serpent sting or hiss at them. There the *wicked one ceases from troubling*; and all their Enemies are made their foot stool. Thus at Death the *scene is alter'd*; they exchange their militant State for a triumphant. They pass out of the field of battle into the city of triumph. Indeed when their bodies are thrown into the grave and lie under the bands of Death they seem to be captives, and close prisoners of war, or rather slain & kill'd by the enemy; but in truth they are conquerors, yea more than conquerors. In dying they obtain a victory more glorious than all the celebrated conquests of *Cesar or Alexander*. Myſtery this! tho' they die in the fight, yet they overcome by the blood of the Lamb; and ride in triumphal Chariot, drawn by mighty Angels, with the highest ensigns of victory, thro' the Territories of the Prince of the power of the air, into the heavenly Kingdom, where they receive not a crown of fading laurel, but a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory. And surely this bespeaks the day of a Believers Death to be better than the day of his Birth.

5. *THEY were born in a state of Trouble, Misery & Sorrow, on outward as well as spiritual Accounts; but at Death they are put out of the reach of all Innumerable Diseases & Disasters await & threaten every man, as soon as he comes into the World.* Job 14.1. *Man that is born of a woman is of few days*

and full of trouble. Job 5. 7. *Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.* It is as natural since the fall, which brought death and misery into the world, for man to be in trouble, as 'tis for the sparks to fly upward. Affliction is become in sense congenial, and proper to man: Evil pursues him continually and unavoidably, while in a state of sin or imperfection. Who can enumerate the vast & horrid Train of Calamities, that man as soon as born is compass'd withal! There is sickness, pain, poverty, disgrace, slavery, bereavements, &c. These things all are liable to, as soon as they come into this evil World, and as long as they continue here. Even *Believers* themselves while here do often meet with sore trials. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous.* Their lives are sometimes filled up with a course and succession of troubles; and in much tribulation they pass the time of their journeying on earth. But now at Death, Believers are deliver'd out of their suffering state. When they die they put off their sackcloth and every token of sorrow. *They rest from their labours, fatigues, and inquietudes; never more to eat the bread of adversity, or to drink the waters of affliction.* At death all their tears and fears are done away, and every threatening cloud vanishes; there remains no more any weak & trembling hand, or feeble knees; no more any quivering lips or fearful heart; no more any weeping eye, or wounded bleeding spirit, no sighing breast, no pale face, nor complaining voice. After death they shall no more get their bread with the sweat of their brows; they shall no more hunger or thirst; neither shall the sun light on them, nor

any heat. In the grave they'l be *bid from the* scourge of the tongue, shall no more hear the voice of calumny, nor be trampled on by the foot of pride. There *the weary are at rest*, and the servant is free from his cruel master; the prisoners rest together and the poor are saved from the hand of the mighty. The Saints at death pass into a safe harbour & quiet haven, where they are beyond every rough sea, and no proud wave can dash against them, nor any tossing tempest or rude occurrent invade them ever, to disturb their sweet repose. This shews that the day of Believers death is better than the day of their birth; which usher'd them into a World of sin & sorrow & vexation, and brought them on this stage of vanity, where are scenes of care & trouble and difficulty without number.

6. *THEY were born in a very dangerous & exposed condition; liable to the damnation of Hell, but Death puts them out of all danger.* Every one is born an heir of Hell. Every Child, as soon as born, is in danger of the Judgment, in danger of Hell-fire, liable to be cast into the devouring flames and everlasting burnings. — But now Believers (having been first in their Justification legally acquitted,) are at their death *actually deliver'd from the wrath to come*, deliver'd for ever from going down into the horrible pit, and their state render'd eternally safe and secure. This reflection loudly proclames the happy difference between the death of Believers, and their birth; and tells us that the former is unspeakably preferable to the latter.

7. *THEY were born in a state of exile and estrangement from the blessed GOD; but when the*

die, are admitted into his special & glorious presence. Adam in his first & innocent estate walk'd with God, and was happy in his gracious presence & blessed fellowship, *sitting under his shadow with delight*; and his banner over him was love. But Adam by his disobedience forfeited and lost this inestimable privilege, both as to himself, and his whole natural posterity: So that all the guilty race of fallen Man are born in a state of distance & alienation from GOD, and are under a sentence of banishment from his presence. All men are by nature *Fugitives* from the face of GOD, *Deserters, aliens, & Exiles*. The Scripture in many places ascribes to them these characters. And tho' the *Elect* are in their regeneration restored to communion with GOD; and are said, from being *afar off*, to be brought *nigh* by the blood of JESUS: yet as long as they abide in the earth, walking by faith, and not by sight, they call themselves *Pilgrims & Strangers*; and are said still to be *absent from the Lord*. Their fellowship with GOD is but mediate, and very broken & unsettled. But when they die, then they are called home, and receiv'd into their heavenly Father's house; where they are no longer at the least unhappy distance from Him, or under any bidings of His face. Then faith ends in vision, & hope expires in fruition, and love ripens into extasy of joy. When they are *absent from the body*, they're *present with the Lord*, 2 Cor. 5. 8. And what unknown happiness does this imply! Thus the day of the Believers death is better than the day of his birth, inasmuch as it delivers him from those many evils, which his birth was either accompany'd with or introductory to.

I I. THE truth of the doctrine will more clearly be seen, if we compare the Goods & Advantages of the present & future state; which will appear very different and unequal. The glorious Excellencies & Felicities of that state Believers die into, are infinitely superiour to all the Enjoyments & Advantages that state they are born into. The latter when weighed with the former are but as *small dust of the balance*. Here to hint a few things briefly: and I shall be the more brief in some of the particulars, because I find I have somewhat improperly prevented myself in the former part of the discourse.

1. DEATH translates the Elect into a state of Retribution; Birth only introduc'd them into a state of Probation. The present Life is their working season, and time of preparation for Eternity: Men are here in a state of *expectancy*, upon their trials and under discipline; this is the state they are born into: but Death translates them into a state of *rewards*; where they are above means & ordinances and no longer wear the style of Candidates or Probationers, but change it for that of Possessors and Inheritors. Immediately upon their death, comes the particular Judgment, which declares them good and faithful Servants, and decrees to them the eternal recompences. As much then as the End is more excellent than the Means, so much does the future state excell the present.

2. DEATH transmits Believers into a Place infinitely better than the place, which their birth brought them into. They were born into this World, they die into another and superiour World. They were brought forth in a vale of tears; when they

lie, they ascend into the *mount of glory*, the everlasting hill of blessing. Death transports them into a better Country, even an *heavenly*. Indeed the Bodies of departed Saints are repositd in the gloomy and noisome grave, (so it is to sense, tho' to faith it's *enlightned & perfumed* by our LORD's once lying in it) where cover'd with the clods of the valley, they become a prey to fordid worms; and lie undistinguish'd from the bodies of the wicked, till the day, when the SON of GOD shall raise them out of the polluted earth, and fashion them like His own most glorious body. However as to the separate *Spirits* of just men, these immediately pass out of the dark valley into the realms of light & bliss; and are lodged safe in everlasting mansions of rest & joy, magnificence & beauty. *Luk. 23. 43. This day* said the crucifyed J E S U S to the penitent Thief on the cross with Him) *shalt thou be with me in Paradise*; — a place this, never stain'd with sin, nor shaded by any sorrow; a place design'd by infinite Goodness for the everlasting entertainment of God's Children; contriv'd by infinite Wisdom, created by infinite Power, and purchased by infinite Merit: every way becoming the glory and bounty of the great Giver; and conspiring to the happiness of the Possessors: a place all calm, harmonious, and serene, inconceivably bright, glorious & ravishing; which needs neither Sun nor Moon to enlighten it, for the Lamb is the light thereof. Surely this troublesome and howling *Wilderness* is not worthy to be compar'd with the promised *Canaan*, that good Land, & glory of all lands, the perfection of beauty. Surely *Heaven* is a place infinitely more eligible than

than this dark & filthy *Earth*. And proportionably more desirable to a Believer is the day of his death, than the day of his birth.

3. *DEATH unites Believers to infinitely better Society, than what their birth introduced them into.* The best company in this world are the *Saints*; but how imperfect are these? and what a mixture is there of the *wicked* among them, whose evil conversation must needs vex every righteous Soul? And thus it is often, the *Saints* are so troubled at or by the grievous ways of bold Transgressors, that they cry out one and another, *Wo is me that I dwell in Mesek, that I sojourn in the tents of Kedar*; and their wish for the wings of a Dove, that so they might flee away and be at rest. — Yea, here on *Earth*, the Society of the Godly among themselves, is wretchedly imbitter'd & sour'd by the unhappy relicts of the old Leven in them. Pride, Envy, Uncharitableness, Ignorance, and Error do in no little degree too often disturb and spoil the conversation of the *Saints* themselves. — But there are no Jarrs, Discords, or Misunderstandings among perfected *Spirits*. There are no storms in the upper & invisible regions. The *Saints* in heaven are all entirely joyned together in one mind; they all speak the same pure Language, and sing one uninterrupted Song. They are all Unity, Peace and Love, Order, & Concord. Mutual Endearments are continually passing from one to t'other among the *Angels* & *Saints*; and charity reigns which is the bond of perfection. What a happy change then does the Believer make at Death! And how surprising to him to go out of a humorsome, foolish, wrangling world

world, and find himself presently in the midst of Saints and Angels, whose conversation is the most wise, (infinitely wiser than that in Solomon's Court) the most amicable, peaceful, and every way charming; embraced by them with the loudest congratulations, and receiving from them the highest expressions of Love & Friendship. Is it not desirable then to take our farewell of this lower world, this habitation of cruelty, this den of Dragons; and mounting on the wings of ministring Spirits, to take our flight up to the heavenly World, the region of peace, tranquillity, and happiness? — Yea, surely! If Peter, when in the Mount with Moses and Elias, and the transfigur'd J E S U S, rejoiced in spirit, and said, *It is good being here*; What a capture then was he in, when death carry'd him to Mount Zion, to the city of the living GOD, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men, to the glorify'd J E S U S, and to GOD the Judge of all?

4. *DEATH advances Believers to infinitely higher Honours than any are born to or ever attain in this world.* At Death they are fixed in the most honourable Station, and employ'd in the most noble exalted services; They are carest in Abraham's bosom: they sit down with Christ in his Throne, and are with Him in all His glory, (Rev. 3. 21. Joh. 7. 24.) They shine as the Stars, yea as the Sun in the Kingdom of Heaven. And surely there can be no Dignities in *this* world comparable to those heavenly Preferments. The Saints are made Kings and Priests unto GOD & the Father; at death they sit on their costly shining robes, and their sparkling

ling massy crowns of honour; and become Pillars in the Temple which is above, beautiful & glorious. They have a good name, more excellent than the name of the great ones in the earth; and none of the Potentates of this World, none of the chief Captains or mighty men may be compar'd with them. Verily Solomon in all his terrene Pomp and Glory (which the Queen of the South so much admir'd) was infinitely inferiour to them.

5. D E A T H possesses Believers of infinitely better and greater Riches, than any which the Sons of men are ever heirs of in this World. In Heaven there are Treasures unknown, riches unsearchable, the true riches; out-bidding our most rais'd expectations & exceeding our most extended wishes. In comparison of which all the wealth of this world is but a trifle; a thing of nought, meer emptiness and vanity. In Heaven the Saints enjoy GOD and CHRIST, and the blessed SPIRIT: in whom are all possible treasures of good, and an universal confluence of all imaginable Beatitudes. The riches of divine *Alfufficiency* are expended on the Saints in Light. They have riches of glory, which no mortal eye hath seen, no ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man. 1 Cor. 2. 9.

I N a word, The Saints at death enter Life, a more noble life than this earthly, and into a state of the most refined pleasures. They are admitted then into the world of light, and life, and love, and enjoyment: into the world of blessed realities, of substantial unmingl'd and immortal delights. Where what was here their consolation, is perfected; and unknown pleasures superadded to enhance the satisfaction.

action. Here they fed on *corruptible* things: in heaven they eat *Angels* unperishing food; the sweetest, purest and most delicious fare imaginable, they are *blessed with all spiritual blessings in heaven* places in *Christ Jesus*: Blessings incomparably more *sublime and rich*, than what this world in its best estate can afford. The unsparing hand of Divine Love is open and *bountiful* in the communication of every desirable and satisfying Good. without the least evil *mixture or interruption*. And the faculties of the humane Soul are *invigorated & enlarg'd* to receive, to sustain, and enjoy the fullest and most felicitating derivations of divine favour. Here in this world the Soul is not capable of taking in, or subsisting under, what perfected spirits enjoy. I suppose, *Adam* himself in Paradise had not a mind big and strong enough, to admit the rays of heavenly light, and bear up under the excess of glory and felicity enjoy'd above: but in order to this, even *his* powers needed some further enlargement and fortification. How *weak* and *receivable* was his understanding; how *wavering* and *mutable* his will, how *corruptible* his affections and appetites? He was form'd and fitted by his nature, to live in a world of *sense*, to converse with sensible objects, and to feed on the *dust*. Though there was an admirable *rectitude* in all his faculties; there was not that *elevation*, activity, capacity, vigour which the Saints in light have. The *earthly* life of man, even in his state of integrity, is a *low mean animal* life, in compare with the *heavenly*. The life of Saints after death is more *spiritual, angelical, and divine*. The image of GOD
D upon

upon them is drawn with more *illustrious* character. The *divine nature* in them is raised to a glorious *perfection*. Their *understandings* are filled with *beatifical light*, & their *wills* with the most *seraphic love*. They have the *supreme Truth* unveiled before them, and the *supreme Good* immediately present with them; and hence their own *nature* being *fulminated*, and enabled to take in the fullest discoveries, and bear the strongest happy impressions, how *unspeakably blessed* must glorified Saints necessarily be! O how rich, glorious and happy beyond all comparison or comprehension! What a most *re* *excellent, divine* life do they live! — In heaven with all their *enlarged* powers they serve & glorify and enjoy G O D, in such an *exalted* manner, as is above our present capacity or conception. In this life that now is, the Saints are in their *infancy* and *childhood*; but at death their *manly* state arrives, the infant of days commences a perfect man, and the child dies an hundred years old, *Isa. 65. 20*. Death is to the Saints a happy *transitus* from minority to maturity, and advances them to a blessed height of *knowledge, wisdom, holiness* and joy such as was never found in any Saint on earth; not in our first *Parents* themselves, even when newly come out of the creating hands of G O D, with the glory of his image upon them.

AND, which unspeakably *magnifies* the bliss and excellency of their state, it is *eternal* and *immutable*. The *primitive* paradisaical state of man was *variable* & uncertain. There was a possibility of its coming to a conclusion; as wretched experience has dolefully manifested. But now the blessed state

of glorified Spirits is *eternal*; their beauty unfading; their inheritance incorruptible, their crown imperishable, a more enduring substance, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. In which respect the Saints in heaven are vastly happier than *Adam* in innocence; and are *as the Angels of GOD*; dwelling in a Kingdom which cannot be moved, in life everlasting. When Believers die, they do in a most emphatical sense *pass from Death into Life*. Death is the Soul's flight into the land of the living, the ocean of divine life; even a state of blessedness, *eternally progressive*.

T H U S in various regards, *it is made evident that the day of a godly man's death, is better than the day of his birth*. In the day of his death he is delivered from innumerable *Evils*, which in the day of his birth he was either suffering of or subject unto. And in the day of his Death, he receives possession of innumerable & inestimable *Felicities*, infinitely superior to all the advantages and blessings which that state can possibly afford, that in the day of his birth he entred into. He had privileges in his birth-day: he has privileges in his death-day: yet *the last are more than the first; and better is the end of life, than the beginning thereof*.

B U T before I come to the Application, let me first hint here one thought further; which is, That the day of a Believer's death is preferable to the day of his birth, with respect to himself, his own comfort and happiness: so it is preferable likewise with respect to *GOD*, his glory and praise. *Precious is the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints*. When a Saint dies, *GOD receives more glory,*

than he did when the man was born. His *nativity* and introduction into this world, was an ordinary *work of Providence*; but his departure and translation to a better world is a *special work of Redemption*. At his birth, the *common goodness* of GOD to the Person born, to the Parents, and World, was exercised. At his death the *peculiar love and rich grace* of GOD towards the dissolved Person is displayed in receiving his separated Soul to infinite happiness. At his *birth*, the Person himself could not *actively* praise GOD for his goodness: at best he could only *borrow* assistance from others; and *sinful Men* on earth were his mouth, if any at all praised GOD on his behalf, in the day he was born: but now in the day of his *death*, the Saint *himself* blesses GOD: he ascends to GOD in the chariot of praise, incircled with a bright guard of shouting *Angels*: He enters into *Zion*, the city of GOD, with songs and everlasting joy upon his head: All *Saints* and *Seraphs* triumphantly *greet* him upon his glad arrival; they *exalt the LORD* together & magnify his name with thanksgiving. The whole heavens ring with acclamations of joy & loud Hallelujahs on the blessed occasion. GOD is glorified in the Saint, whether in life or death; yet the latter is more glorious than the former. But I shall *dismiss* this thought: and now proceed to draw some useful deductions, and direct you in the practical improvement of the former notion or thought upon the Text.

USE, I. HENCE how much better than the day of his birth, will the day of the godly man's Resurrection be!

IF the day of his death has so great a *pre-eminence* above the day of his birth, how much better then will the day of his future *Resurrection* be! The day of his more public espousals, more glorious coronation, and illustrious triumphs! The day when his body shall be raised out of the silent dust in great power and untarnish'd glory; the day, when this *corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality, and Death shall be swallowed up in victory.* The day when Soul and Body (those ancient & long separated Friends) shall be reunited, and their redemption perfected; and a vast addition thereupon be made to the blessedness and glory of the Saint. O happy day! Bright and blissful morning, that shall never know any cloud or evening!

USE, II. HENCE how much worse is the day of the ungodly man's death, than the day of his birth! Contraries have contrary consequences. The blessedness in the text is appropriated to the wise and godly. This plainly informs us of the vast difference there is between the Death of Saints and Sinners. It is a natural inference from the text, that the day of an unbeliever's death is *worse* than the day of his birth: *Worse* it is indeed; for the Unbeliever lies in the *same* miserable state wherein he was born; and this exceedingly aggravated. He dies *more* under the power of an enraged Devil, and of various Lusts; under *greater* guilt, and more terrible wrath; loses all the Comforts of this life, with the hopes of a better, and is carried down into *Eternal* Torments, beyond all relief. O how *regiously foolish* then are carnal Sinners to pride themselves

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themselves in an honourable birth, a rich patrimony, beauty of body, bright endowments of nature, and the like; since they were born in a state of sin and wrath, and have such a dreadful doom awaiting them! *O the madness that is in the hearts of jovial secure Sinners, who are going down to the dead, and their feet take hold of hell; but they know it not: & the fire besets them round about, yet they lay it not to heart.* Eccl. 11.7, 8. *Truly the light is sweet, and pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun. But if a man live many years, and rejoyce in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many.* Psal. 65. 20. *The sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.*

USE, III. *WHAT Obligations then are Believers under to GOD for sending his Son to be our Saviour.* It is by means of CHRIST'S Obedience unto the Death, that the day of Believers death is better than the day of their birth. Had not the SON of GOD taken to himself humane nature, been born of a woman, fulfilled the Law, and borne the curse, all mankind must necessarily have been forever lost in that state of sin and guilt, wherein they are born. None eye pityed us, to do any of these unto us, to have compassion upon us; but we were cast out, and must have perish'd, had not the LORD looked upon us, and said unto us, *LIVE.* Blessed be GOD the GOD of all grace, who has so loved the world as to send forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem and save his Elect. He laid help on one mighty to save; who has for their conquer'd & disarm'd the king of terrors: has take

away the bitterness of death by his cross, and turned his cup of affliction, (the last which Believers shall drink,) into a cup of blessing. O what thanks do Believers owe to GOD and CHRIST! O how precious shou'd the Redeemer be unto you, and how glorious in your eyes a compassionate GOD! Take to your selves words, and sing as in 1 Cor. 15. 55, 56, 57. *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Let all the Saints of the most high, joyn their thankful & triumphant *Amen*, to this Song of Joy and Praise.

USE, IV. *HERE is matter of Comfort to us all under the bereavement of godly Relatives & Friends.* It has been a very melancholy dying time among us of late; and (which is a great aggravation of the mortality, and shou'd put the sharpest accents upon our lamentations) the LORD seems *not* so much to have been weeding up the *worst*, as transplanting the *best*. However, that these are only *transplanted*; not lost and perish'd; but remov'd to another and better place, having exchanged earth for heaven, is a consideration, which shou'd be improv'd to *temper our sorrow*, and qualify our mourning. The bereavement of *pious* and dear relatives and Acquaintants is one of the tenderest and *most affecting* trials in the world; and calls for special supports to keep us from being overwhelmed with tears of bitterness. Now what greater support, what greater refreshment, than this, to consider that their death was a *blessed and glorious change*

change to them; that they are still alive in their better part or immortal nature, and are with GOD. Well then, has Death ravisht from us our dear infant Children, that were in covenant with GOD? Has he taken away our pious, hopeful young ones, or elder praying and useful Relations or Friends? *Here is matter of great Consolation; a reviving cordial provided, which may keep us from fainting.* If the day of their death was *better* to them, than the day of their birth, (as we are sure it was) why then shou'd we be *dejected* or impatient, and mourn inordinately? Methinks I now hear the deceased Godly saying to us, as our departing Saviour to his Disciples, Joh. 14. 28. *If ye loved me, ye would rejoyce because I go unto the Father.* And as in Luke 23. 28. *Weep not for me: but weep for your selves and for your children.*

THE prospect of that *happy Change*, they have made, should check our hard thoughts of GOD, and curb our uneasy resentments. This shou'd almost dry up our flowing tears, & turn our pensive complaints into thanksgiving Songs. We have reason to congratulate, rather than to condole their removal. Thus, as to our deceased Children particularly; did we not rejoyce at their *birth*? Why then do we not much more rejoyce in their death, as a happy *Translation* and unspeakable Gain to them; since *of such* (the children of the Covenant) *is the Kingdom of GOD.* If we mourn *immoderately*, it is from carnal Self-love, and idolatrous Creature-love. O when shall we learn to *die* to Creatures; and under the loss of them, to *weep as tho' we wept not*? I would not have you to be ignorant, Brethren, con-

cerning

cerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have *no hope*: But if we believe that Jesus died and rose again; even so them likewise who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.—Wherefore *comfort* one another with these words, 1 *Thes.* 4. 13, &c.

USE, V. *HERE* is matter of support to Believers, under all the various Troubles of Life. What do you meet with much Adversity, and many trials both in the inner and outer man? Yet here is Consideration sufficient, if duely entertain'd, to alleviate all your heavy burdens, and sweeten all your bitter Cups; The day of your *death* shall be infinitely *better* to you, than the day of your *birth*; and that happy day is not *afar off*. Let this therefore encourage you, and invigorate your believing hope & Patience amidst all your Tribulations, and raise you above all the terrors of sense. By an eye of faith look through the gloomy scenes of Time, and take a prospect of your happy *Exit*, that draws nigh; which will bring on bright & never-ending scenes of glory, & will put an everlasting period to all your present difficulties, doubts, dangers & distresses. Believer, lift up your hands that hang down, and hold on eternal life: lift up your eyes & look at that blessed hope: lift up your heads with joy; for your redemption draweth nigh.

USE, VI. *HENCE* the Children of GOD need not be afraid of Death; nor unwilling to die, at the will of Providence. This thought shou'd reconcile you to Death, change the visage of this last enemy, and teach you to look upon it as your *Friend*, (rather than your Foe) coming with a message of peace,

peace, and not of terror to you ; and make you welcome its approach, at what time, or in what way forever. Why shou'd you *fear Death* with any amazement, or why shou'd you *love Life* with any fondness and delight, since the day of your death is so much to be prefer'd to the day of your birth, or any days of your life here ? Learn then to fasten with the Apostle, Act. 20. 24. *Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy.* 1 Cor. 5. 8. *We are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.* 2 Tim. 4. 6. &c. *I am now ready to be offered ; — I have fought a good fight.* Hence forth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, &c. Let this, O Believer, be the temper and language and earnest expectation of your Soul. O take heed you do not grieve the divine Spirit, by whom you are sealed to the day of redemption ; nor reflect on the faith and hope of the Gospel, by a servile love of life, or slavish dread of death. Be neither *asham'd* of the reproach, nor *afraid* for the terror of death ; seeing both are taken away by the cross of CHRIST.

USE, VII. HENCE we may infer matter of caution & direction, with respect to the celebration of one's Birth-day.

THERE are divers special periods of time, which have contracted a kind of solemnity, and have usually some peculiar regards paid to them. Thus the Beginning of the Year is a remarkable season, and what every one takes a particular notice of. Some of the Servants of GOD have sometimes solemniz'd it by a religious employment of it, and found their account in so doing. — There is like

wife one's *Birth-day*, which is to every man his
 New-year's day. This also has been *signaliz'd* by
 special respects paid to it. The anniversary cele-
 bration of birth-days is an *ancient* custom. Tho'
 in sacred Scripture we read not of any
 that practis'd this, but *Pharaoh*, and *Gen. 40. 20.*
Merod, and perhaps *Jeroboam* (the second) *Mar. 6. 21.*
Hof. 7. 5.
 of *Israel*. It is not recorded of
Abraham, of *David*, or any of the Saints and Peo-
 ple of GOD, as I remember. Yet *Divines* do not
 universally nor absolutely *condemn* the custom. As
 the thing it self (besure) there is no *institution*
 command of GOD for it. To commemorate our
 birth and beginning is what *the duty of every day*
requires: however it may be the *more special* work
 of an *anniversary* day, provided all superstition and
 abuse be avoided. The *civil* observation of birth-
 days, and making natalitial entertainments practi-
 sed by persons of distinction, who on such occasions
 have the company and receive the civilities of their
 friends, as well as confer favours on
 their Servants and Dependents, is a *Henry's Expos.*
 of *Gen. 40. 20.*
 age in it self *lawful*, and innocent
 though if due regard be had to the
 rules of christian *sobriety* and *moderation*. But to
 devote such days (as the Persons before mention'd
) to perfect *Idleness*, *Luxury* and *extravagant*
birth, is to bid defiance to their great Creator, to
 contradict the ends and reasons of their birth, and
 to act as if they were sent into the world only to
 serve their bellys, and gratify the lusts of the flesh.
 It thinks, in the solemnization of one's birth-
 day, *retirement* with *fasting* and *prayer*, were a
 greater

greater propriety than carnal feasting and merriment with others. It seems more agreeable and proper to observe it as a time of *humiliation*, than of rejoicing: at least there should be a pious mixture of humble and devout reflections upon such an occasion. For *what* was the day, which we commemorate? Truly a day full of *unhappy* circumstances, that call for a *godly sorrow* and *shame*. One observes, That an eminent Person, in his Diaries, as often as his Birth-day arrived, wrote this; *Dies Calamitatis*, i.e. A CALAMITOUS DAY unto me: † A day therefore it is for a man to *afflict his Soul* in. At such a time we shou'd seriously reflect on the guilt, pollution, misery and danger, which attended us in the day of our Birth. It shou'd deeply affect us to consider, *what we were born*; Ignorant, sinful, miserable Creatures: Children of wrath, Children of the Devil, and Heirs of Hell. It shou'd deeply affect us to consider, *what we are while in a natural State*; a seed of evil-doers, rebels against GOD, enemies of CHRIST, hating of, and hated by him. It shou'd affect us to consider, how (while in an unrenewed condition) we *spend our years in wrath* and in sin; and all the days of our life are (in some sense) worse than the day of our birth. — It should affect us to consider, the *patience & forbearance* of Heaven towards us; and fill us with wonder to think, what *Cumberers* of the ground we have been, and yet are spared, and have had our lives fill'd up with mercies. — It shou'd affect us to consider the *goodness of GOD to us in our birth*.

† See a Sermon on Eccl. 9. 10. Entitul'd, *Thoughts for a Birth-day*, pag. 36.

that tho' we came guilty, polluted and wretched,
into a wretched, polluted, guilty World, yet we
were not born *dead*, nor born *Fools and Ideots*, nor
born among *Epists or Pagans*, in a land of Dark-
ness: but among *Christians & Protestants*, in a land
of light; where we were, almost as soon as born,
solemnly given up to GOD in *Baptism*, in the way
of his appointment, engag'd to be the LORD's, and
his favour intreated for us; where we were no soon-
er come to any maturity, but we had Parental In-
structions, as well as Ministerial; where we have
the word preach'd to hear, and the word written to
read; in which are brought to us the glad tidings
of a SAVIOUR, and the gracious offers of Salvation
by him made unto us. We shou'd offer *praises* to
GOD, that he has looked upon us in our *low estate*;
sent his Son JESUS CHRIST to *purchase* for us Re-
demption out of the sinful state we were born in,
sent forth his holy SPIRIT to *apply* the purchased
redemption to all that believe in the name of
Jesus. We shou'd bless the Divine SPIRIT for all
his strivings with us and breathings in us. More-
over, We should solemnly *examine* ourselves, whe-
ther we have been made partakers of spiritual
regeneration; whether we are born from above &
renewed in the spirit of our minds. If we find this
not our case, then we shou'd be *solicitous it may*
come so; and immediately apply to CHRIST
the head of Influences, for regenerating grace, and
solve not to rest easy till we are born again, and
have CHRIST formed in us. But on the other hand,
really we are begotten of GOD, and created in
CHRIST JESUS to good works, we shou'd be *thankful*
to

to the LORD and praise his holy name; considering what a glorious change he has wrought in and upon us, and what blessings he does bestow on us in the life that now is: considering also what a happy Eternity is before us; what a blessed & glorious day, the day of our Death will be, and what swift advances we are making towards it; every year that passes over us, bringing us so much nearer to the day of our death, and the end of all our sin and sorrow.---These things we shall do well to consider on our birth-days in a solemn manner: and therewith comfort our selves under all our troubles and against all our fears; and thereby quicken ourselves to walk in wisdom, & as becometh our privileges; to live holily & serviceably, that so every year we finish may leave us fitter and riper for heaven, and to redeem the time, that if the year advancing should be our dying year, we may be found about our work, and finish our course with Joy.

THUS we see the *right method* of solemnizing our birth-day, and if it be thus employ'd, it will be as profitable as well as innocent practice, to observe it, in the annual returns of it.

THE VIIIth & last USE is of *Exhortation*, first to the godly, and then to the ungodly.

I. LET me offer to the *Saints* and *Children* of GOD, some words of counsil and exhortation grounded on the text. I wou'd exhort you then---

O F T E N to make this text the subject of your devout meditation. Study to obtain the fullest acquaintance with the several circumstances of the day of your birth, and also of the day of your death.

Fort

Form a right judgment of both ; get a fixed belief of the happy difference between them ; and be often entertaining your minds with serious reflections upon the same. This will be of very profitable consequence divers ways ; and particularly it will tend to preserve you from *envying the prosperity of the wicked* ; for when you mark the peacefull end of the upright man, and consider the end of the ungodly, which is destruction, how can you but chuse with *losses*, rather to suffer affliction with the people of GOD, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season ; and with the *Apostle*, esteem godliness with contentment to be great gain ?

Furthermore, *END EAVOUR* to get an assurance of your title to the blessed privilege in our next. Be solicitously enquiring, *Will this be my happy case ?* If GOD shou'd now summon me to depart, am I ready to be offered ; and is it probable I shall find the day of my death better to me, than the day of my birth ? Inquire what *evidences* you have of a right to this blessedness : labour to *clear up* your title, and get a well-grounded *hope*. Without this your *state* may be secure, yet your *soul* justly sad and uncomfortable, both in life & death. Wherefore give diligence to make your calling and election sure.

Again, *LET Believers possess their Souls in humble patience*. The Saints, when by an eye of faith they take a view of the unseen treasures and promises reserved for them in the coming world, are sometimes to grow too *uneasy* and *discontented* under the various trials they meet with here ; and with inordinate eagerness to *wish* for their *dismission*, even

even as *they that watch for the morning*. Hence some have not loved their lives to the death; and others have been tortured, not accepting deliverance; knowing that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance, and shou'd obtain a better resurrection. --- *Impatience* under the delays of their departure is an extreme, that Believers sometimes fall into: but it is very faulty, and not to be indulg'd; as reflecting too much on the wisdom and goodness of divine Providence. Be patient therefore, Brethren, unto the coming of the LORD. For ye have need of patience; that after ye have done the will of GOD, ye might receive the promise. --- And verily since the promise is great and pretious, the Believer has need to study patience and *labor after it*. There is danger of tumultuous thoughts and impatient wishes, when he considers, that *for him to die is gain*; and that the day of his death is defer'd, But let him remember also that *for him to live is Christ*; and this will be the best argument to calm and quiet him.

Again, *LET Believers be full of praise and thanksgiving to GOD, under the blessed prospect they have before them*. You have all possible reasons for gratitude and praise; whether you consider the *greatness* of that good and happiness which expects you; or *what divine love has done* to prepare you for and entitle you to it; or how *undeserved* the favour; or what an astonishing *distinction* is made between you, and apostate Spirits with the common herd and unbelieving world of mankind. *O consider these things and praise the Lord*. Bless his holy name, and say continually, Let GOD

Hence magnify'd! who hath delivered me from the power of darkness and translated me into the kingdom of his dear Son: who crowneth me with loving kindness and tender mercies: who will redeem my life from destruction, and preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.—O awake up to sing & give praise; now beginning what will be your eternal employment in the blessed world you are hastning to.

Again, *SEE that you live a life of obedience, and walk as becomes your privileges and expectations.* Be ye the heirs of divine love; and do you look for such things, as a translation to heaven in the hour of death, and a resurrection to glory in the hour of judgment; *what manner of persons* ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness? See then that you endeavour to *walk worthy of the Lord* to all pleasing: that you strive to answer your character, and live up in some measure to the ends of all bonds of your redemption by CHRIST; being diligent in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge and knowledge of our Lord JESUS CHRIST: turning over the deplorable remains of that sinful misery, which you brought into the world with you; sitting loose in your affections from all creature-enjoyments; being watchful against sin; and diligent that you may be found of your Judge in peace, without spot and blameless. In a word, you expect to be distinguish'd from sinners in the happiness of your death; so let it be your care to be distinguished now by the holiness of your life; having your conversation in heaven, and not being conformed to this present world. The more

holy your life is, the more happy will your death be.

Finally, *CAST an eye of pity on the unbelieving Crowd: and do all you can, that sinners may be brought to share with you in your blessed privilege.* Look on them, whose life is among the unclean, whose end is to be cut off, unless seasonable repentance prevent; look on such, I say, not with scorn and contempt, but with christian *concern* and compassion. Let your *bowels yearn* towards them, when you see 'em hanging over the devouring furnace, nigh to cursing; & *save them with fear, pulling them out of the fire.* Do all that in you lies to recover them out of the snare of the Devil, and save the Souls from being drowned in perdition. Instruct the ignorant, warn the unruly, and exhort the daily, while it is called, To day; lest any be hardened thro' the deceitfulness of sin. [*Let Heads of families particularly, thus deal with their Children and Servants; the care of whose souls is most solemly charged on them.*] But above all things, my Brethren, *carry them to the throne of grace* in the arms of your faith and prayer; and earnestly plead with GOD, that they may be brought to repentance, and visited with his salvation. O stand before GOD to speak good for them, and to turn away wrath from them. 1 Tim. 2. begin. *I exhort therefore that first of all (i.e. as we say, by all means,) supplications, prayers, intercessions, --- be made for men; --- for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.* 1 Joh. 5. 16. *If any man see his brother sin a sin, which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them: that sin not unto death.* There is a sin unto death:

not say that he shall pray for it.--- Surely they have hearts of stone, who can see their fellow-creatures upon the brink of destruction; and do not lift up their fervent crys to heaven for them.

BUT the other branch of the exhortation is,
2. *TO the Unregenerate.* O let sinners from what has been said, be concerned to *get into the number of true Believers*; that so the day of their death may be better, than the day of their birth. O unbelievers! GOD now calls you to repent, and turn unto him; to believe on his Son, and flee from the wrath to come, and get ready for the hour of death. And methinks, you have had sufficient motive set before you to engage your speedy compliance with the call of GOD. — Know it; *die you must* sooner or later: so hath GOD ordained, & his word is established for ever: The grave is the house appointed for all living; and when the sett-time come, the dust shall return to the dust, and the spirit to GOD, that gave it. There is no resisting, evading, nor deferring. In the many instances of *mortality* you have seen, more especially of late, you have had this lesson very convincingly read unto you. And many of you have lately been visited with *sickness*; which is the beginning and presage of a *resolution*. The LORD has chasten'd you sore: but he hath not given you over to death. The sorrows of death compassed you, and the pains of hell hold upon you: you found trouble and sorrow. When (it may be) you call'd upon the name of the LORD; and made vows to him in the anguish of your soul. And behold, the LORD hath dealt mercifully with you: you was brought low, and

he helped you. *O consider the patience of a good GOD in sparing of you* : and hearken to his voice, both in your sickness and recovery; whereby he loudly calls upon you to consider your latter end, and so to number your days as to apply your heart unto wisdom. *O that there were such an heart in you!* That you wou'd study the ends, and comply with the calls of Providence to you, both in your affliction and relief: that you may learn righteousness from his judgments, and by his goodness be led to repentance: be awaken'd to confess your sin, and give glory to GOD; in whose hands your breath is, and before whose eyes are all your ways.

Consider, *T O prepare for death is the most important business of life.* Time is a trifle to Eternity, Earth is nothing to Heaven. The end of your being in this world is, by serving and glorifying GOD, to prepare for another. The grand concern is to finish well, to die safely, and be lodged happily in the future state. It matters little how it fares with you here, if you are well-provided for hereafter. Eternal Salvation is the one thing needful. And nothing that is gain'd in the ways of sin, will countervail the loss of that. Mat. 16. 26. *For what a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

Again consider, *HOW inexcusable you will be if you die under the guilt and power of sin, and miss of salvation.* For the way of peace, the path of life is plainly laid out in the Gospel. And the sceptre of mercy is held forth to you; many invitations and the most solemn calls given you in the word written

and preach'd, to come unto CHRIST, that you might have life. — Salvation is tendered to you on the most gracious and condescending terms; the most fair & reasonable. You have also divine help graciously offered, in order to your compliance with the terms; and if under a sense of your own weakness & unworthiness, together with the use of means, you ask the same, it will be granted you. Finally, The holy SPIRIT has been striving with you, and divine Patience has been waiting on you, to just astonishment. *How inexcusable then art thou, O man, who neglectest so great salvation?* How shall you escape? And what wilt thou say, when the Judge shall summon thee to appear before his enlightned tribunal? Verily, *those Scriptures will be fulfilled in you,* to your shame and confusion, — *How often would GOD have gather'd you,* as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and *ye wou'd not?* Because I have called, and *ye refused,* I have stretched out my hand and none regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsil, and wou'd none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your calamity shall come.

Again consider, *HOW miserable you will be if you miscarry at last.* Your natural state is unspeakably miserable: but if you die in your sins, that word will be fulfilled in you, *The last state of that man is worse than the first.* When you come to taste of Death, you'll find it a bitter cup, full of fire and brimstone, and the wine of indignation; the dreggs whereof shall be wrung out & given you to drink. The day of your death will be a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity; a day of slaughter

slaughter & destruction by the Lord GOD of hosts in the valley of darkness. *In that day* when your fear cometh as a desolation, and your destruction as a whirlwind, when distress & anguish cometh upon you, then (saith the LORD) *they shall call upon me, but I will not answer; they will seek me early but they shall not find me*: They will call upon me saying, *Lord, Lord, open to us*: but I will say unto them, *Depart from me ye cursed; I know you not*.—In the dreadful minute, that your dissolution is accomplish'd, your guilty Soul will drop down into the fiery Lake, and be overwhelmed with consuming terrors. GOD will render unto you indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish; and an horrible tempest shall be the portion of your cup. *Know it*; the infamous Sodomite, & vilest Heathen shall have a more tolerable punishment than you. They were *born as guilty and miserable as you*; but they do not *die so*. The Gospel-advantages you have had, will astonishingly aggravate your condemnation; and be as *oyl to the fire*, which makes the flame more intense and devouring. The *condemnation of the Devil* will emphatically be the lot of Gospel-sinners. Mat. 25. 41. *Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels*. Gospel-sinners are charged with *trampling under foot the son of GOD*, and crucifying him afresh: and such may read their doom in Matth. 26. 24, *Wo unto that man by whom the son of man is betrayed*: IT HAD BEEN GOOD FOR THAT MAN, IF HE HAD NOT BEEN BORN.---- And having receiv'd your doom, you will loudly curse the day of your birth, your happy inlet

inlet into the present evil world ; you will curse every day of your *life*, in which you were treasuring up so much guilt and wrath : you will curse the day of your *death*, in which you were cast into outer darkness. You'll curse every *minute* you spend in *hell* : you will call to the mountains and rocks to fall on you, and hide you from the wrath of the Lamb ; *but all in vain* : you shall seek death, and shall not find it ; and shall desire to die, but *death shall flee from you*. Divine power will uphold you in being, and almighty vengeance will plague you every moment, with plagues, that are infinitely worse than ten thousand deaths.---- Behold ! this is the portion of a wicked man from G O D ; the portion of hypocrites and unbelievers ! O what dismal lessons of terror are sounding in their ears !

AND, will you not be *sollicitous to escape* this dreadful misery ? Or are you *made without fear* ? Or do you *shift off* this concern for the *present*, hoping for a more convenient season hereafter ? --- O do not thus *flatter & deceive your self* ; thou fool, this might thy Soul may be required of thee, for ought thou knowest ! O do not put far from you the evil day : Boast not thy self of to morrow, for thou knowest not what a day, or an hour may bring forth. Hear now this, thou that dwellest carelessly and layest not to heart thy latter end, who hast been often reprov'd and still hardnest thy neck ; hear now G O D threatens such an one, (Prov. 29. 1.) *He shall suddenly be destroy'd, and that without remedy*. O tremble lest these things come upon thee one day, in a moment, *Death, and Hell, and eternal Vengeance*. The grave waits for thee ; and hell

hell from beneath is moved to meet thee, and openeth it's mouth to receive your guilty Soul. O be persuaded to *realise your danger*, to consider the uncertainty of Life, the vanity of this World, and the awfulness of Eternity. *Look forward*, and take a prospect of a *departing* world; think how it will appear to you in the hours of sickness and death, and at the door of eternity; then it will lose it's fine shew and deceitful mask, and will appear all ghastly, ugly, and deform'd; it's riches vanity, it's honors false, it's pleasures superficial; and then all your earthly hopes will perish in one moment. Again, *Look into* the *coming* world, and *anticipate* those distressing tho'ts and views, which you will have in a dying hour. Think how *awful*, Death and Eternity will appear unto you! How *glorious* and desirable Heaven will look! How *dreadful* and terrible Hell will look! And how *full of horror* shame, despair, and confusion your departing Soul will be! What bitter reflections, and what fearful expectations will seize your guilty mind! O be persuaded to look forward; and let conscience meditate *terror*, and read to you the *fearful doom* of impenitent sinners. Consider it often, and fear lest one day it befall you; lest it come upon you unawares in an hour that you think not. O hearken to that solemn counsel, Job, 36. 18. *Because there is wrath, beware lest God take thee away with his stroke; and when a great ransom cannot deliver thee.*— O turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die? Consider your ways and turn to the LORD. Make hast and fly for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before you. Tremble lest the fatal blow be given, before you

provided for a happy removal. Now in order to this, things are absolutely requisite; you must be interested in Christ, and born of the Spirit. Wherefore, You must,

SEEK an Interest in CHRIST. If you would escape the wrath of GOD, & die the death of the Righteous; you must be united to Jesus Christ by faith, in whom is all your safety & happiness, and union to whom is the foundation of all Gospel-hope. He that believeth on the Son, hath life everlasting; but he that believeth not, the wrath of GOD abideth on him, and he shall not see life. Blessed are the dead, who die in the LORD. Them that sleep in Jesus, will GOD bring with him. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ: in whom we have redemption thro' his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of divine grace. Christ is the city of refuge; and if death find you in him, Executioners of vengeance will not be able to reach or hurt you. They that believe in Christ, have a Right to Salvation with Eternal Glory, thro' his merits. But such as are out of Christ, are without hope. This made the Apostle count all things but loss and dung, that he might win Christ and be found in him. O let this be likewise your aim & care.

YOU must seek after the New birth; that you may be fit for (as well as have a title to) the inheritance of the saints in light, and be fit to enter into the holy presence of GOD at Death. Justification entitles you to this happiness; and Regeneration qualifies you for it. Without a divine light and holy rectitude in the Soul, you are not capable to perform the elevated duties and services of the heavenly state: nor to relish the spiritual enjoyments, or delight in the holy society there. To be carnally-minded is Death, in the natural tendencies and necessary effects of it: you must be spiritually minded, in order to your obtaining life and peace. To them that are defiled and unbelieving, nothing in heaven is pure or pleasant. We may as reasonably imagine the Swine, that love to tumble in the mire, can be delighted to lie on beds of Ivory and stretch themselves upon soft couches; or a lifeless Carcase to be charmed with the melody of Music; as suppose an unregenerate Soul capable (while such) of being happy in heaven. He can't be happy, unless he be made so against his will and the whole bent of his nature; which is a contradiction in terms; all felicity or pleasure consisting in an agreement of the object and the appetite. In order therefore to the Sinners entrance into the heavenly

kingdom

kingdom, his vitious nature must pass under a renewing sanctifying change. The honor of GOD, as well as the reason of things, requires this : and it is become necessary by the determinate counsell of GOD ; who has said, *Without holiness no man shall see the Lord. Except ye be converted, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of GOD.* If then you wou'd die a happy death, You must seek after the washing of Regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. You must not think of going to heaven in your present case : and how then can you bear to think of dying in it ? Or how dare you think of living any longer in it ? Your lives are prolonged for this end, even that you might prepare to die : and how ungrateful to GOD, as well as injurious to your own Soul, are you, if you trifle away your pretious opportunities ? *O awake out of your carnal security ; shake off your slothful frame and dilatory spirit. No longer abuse the patience of GOD : no longer harden your heart ; but to day while it is called, To day, be sollicitous to obtain a saving conversion to GOD. O strive to enter in at the strait gate, and walk in the narrow way, that leads unto life. Rest not in a partial work of conviction, or a superficial work of reformation. Beware of hypocrisy : beware of formality ; watch against a self flattering, a self sufficient and a self righteous spirit. Content not your self with any thing short of (or instead of) a saving work of grace in the heart. By prayer and in the use of all appointed means wait on GOD, for his renewing influences. Beg of GOD that he would create in you a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within you. Cherish every good motion, and improve every season of grace. Work out your Salvation with fear and trembling : for it is GOD, that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure. Repent therefore and be converted, that your sin may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the LORD. Before the decree bring forth, before the day of the LORD's anger come upon you seek ye the LORD. Seek the LORD while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near. And all the days of your appointed time be waiting till your change comes, with a daily expectation of it, and a diligent preparation for it. Do with your might what your hands find to do : and lay up in store a good foundation against the time to come, that when you are called hence, you may have treasure in Heaven ; and be presented before the face of GOD in Glory with exceeding Joy. AMEN.*

Two Sermons

SHEWING

How to Begin

AND

End the Year,

After a Godly Sort.

Preach'd

the former on New-Year's Day,

the latter on *December 31.*

1721.

To which is added a Discourse on
Jer. xviii. 20.

By **Thomas Forcroft M. A.**

Al. 90. 9, 12. — We spend our Years as a tale that is told.

*So teach us to number our days, that we may apply
our hearts unto Wisdom.*

*1. 8 I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending
with the Lord.*

*Cor. 8 6 We desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would
also finish — the same good Work.*

Boston: Printed by B. Green. 1722.

To the Reader.

WHEN the foregoing Sermon on Eccl. 7. 1. was committed to the Press, I had not determin'd any others shou'd accompany it, and therefore gave no notice of any thing further. But I have since likewise yielded up to my Friends several other Discourses, which are here submitted, with all their Imperfections, to public View; attributing more to their good Intentions in the Publication than to my own Objections against it: Eschewing rather to show the Faults of my Pen, than for the sake of my own Credit to discover any Defect of Gratitude and Civility to such as were pleas'd to hear these Sermons with so great Candour, and with much importunity to ask the Printing of them. The Sermons within this Cover are few in number, but (I am sensible) tedious in length. I have not yet learn'd the modish Way of Preaching, or a short, nice, and cursory manner of handling Texts; nor I affect it. Common Sermons, in a Popular Audience, allow, and indeed require a Style more lax, and verbose, than wou'd be critical and accurate Discourses. Tho', these Sermons were (at least several of them) so large in the first Composing, now in the Transcribing. The Lecture Sermon is particularly much longer: nothing that was deliver'd being omitted; many Paragraphs inserted, that were left out for want of time, and some other Enlargements made.

I shall make no Apologies for the publishing, any more than the preaching, these Sermons; hoping, I've been govern'd by regular Views in both; & not despairing altogether of their being helpful in some little degree to serve the Cause of Peace, and Truth and Holiness among us: which ('tis my comfort) I make honest Aim and Endeavour; and for which End they are earnestly recommended (together with the generous Publishers, and careful Readers of them) to the Divine Blessing, by the unworthy Author.

Boston, March

26. 1722.

T.



A SERMON on NEW-YEAR's Day.

EZEK. XLV. 18.

Thus saith the Lord GOD, In the first month, in the first day of the month, thou shalt take a young Bullock without blemish, and cleanse the Sanctuary.



ANY and various were the Rites and solemnities to be attended under the Ceremonial Dispensation. Most of Them were contain'd in the *Mosaical* Law of Commandments. But here in our Text we have a *new* Institution;

which I don't remember to have met with before. It is the *anniversary* Solemnity of *Cleansing the Sanctuary* by a sacrifice of atonement in the *entrance* of the Year. Thus saith the Lord GOD, in the first month, &c.

HERE 1. We may observe the *Work* assigned :
2. The *Time* fixed.

1. HERE is a *Duty* prescrib'd; namely, *The offering a sacrifice to GOD, for purging of the Temple.*
The

The *matter* of the sacrifice was a *Young Bullock without blemish*. "Being design'd for the *Honour* of GOD, who is infinitely *perfect*, it ought to be the most perfect in it's Kind, else we do not give him the glory that is due unto his name. — Moreover, This signify'd the complete *strengib* and *parity* that was to be in CHRIST, the dying sacrifice; and the *sincerity* of Heart, and *unblamea-* *bleness* of Life that shou'd be in *Believers*, who are presented to GOD as *living sacrifices*. The Oblation was to be of the *Fattest and Choiceſt*; for GOD deserves our *Best*; and *Wo* to them who present unto Him only the *Halt*, the *Lame* and the *Blind*, the *Torn* and the *Sick*. Should I accept this of your hands? saith the LORD. *Cursed is the Deceiver*, who sacrificeth to the LORD a corrupt thing. For I am a great King, saith the LORD of hosts.

Now the *End* of this offering was to *make Reconciliation for the House of Israel to cleanse the Sanctuary*, to expiate for the sins of the *preceding Year*; the *Iniquities* of the holy Things, both of the *Priesthood*, and the *Congregation*; And also to *bespeak the necessary Aids and Restraints* of Divine Grace for the *Future*; that they might escape former *Errors and Pollutions*, and worship and serve GOD in a more holy and acceptable manner.

AND hereby They signified Their *Repentance* and *Humiliation* for what had been amiss in Them and in Their Performances in Time past: as well as Their *Vow* and *Promise* to be more watchful faithful & diligent in serving GOD for Time to come.

† Mal. 1. 13, 14.

2. HERE is the *Time* appointed, even the *first Day of the first Month*. The work aforesaid was be the *annual* Employment of the *New-Year's* Day. And 'twas Employment *sutable* to the Day, well-fitting the season; very *proper* work to begin the Year withal.

THE *first Day of the first Month* is a famous Day in Scripture, for many memorable Actions & Events. 'Twas on *this* Day that *Noah* † first looked out of the *Ark*, after the Flood, and had the joyful sight of the restored World. A happy New-Year's Day indeed was This. --- 'Twas on *this* Day also that *Moses* † (the man of GOD) reared the *Tabernacle* for Divine Worship; according to the Commandment of the LORD. And a good New-Year's Day's Work it was. --- And 'twas on *this* Day that *Serai* the Priest * began his Journey from *Babylon* to *Jerusalem*, on the pious Intention to set up the house of GOD there, and to teach in *Israel*, the good Knowledge of the LORD. A good beginning of the New-Year! --- And so was that in *Hezekiah's* time †, when on the first Day of the first Month, he began to *repair* and purify the *Temple*, and set in order the Service thereof; having it in his heart at the same Time to covenant with the LORD GOD of *Israel*, that his fierce wrath might turn away from Them.

By these and other Things, the *first Day of the first Month* has been *signaliz'd*, and hath contracted a sort of solemnity; and challenges a *special* Remembrance from Us, in the annual Reversion of it; not

† Gen. 8. 13. † Exod. 40. 2. * Ezra 7. 9. † 2 Chron. 29. 17.
indeed

indeed a *superstitious Observation* of it as holy Time, but an Application of it to some religious Exercises, which at this Juncture are peculiarly seasonable. And accordingly it has been the laudable *Usage* of many serious Christians both ancient and modern, to *distinguish* this Day (in the Yearly Returns of it) by agreeable Exercises of Devotion: Which pious Custom they have found to contribute exceedingly to the inflaming their Zeal, exciting their Diligence and promoting their attainments in Religion. And this Reflection (methinks) is Argument enough to *recommend* the Practice, were there no *Scripture* Rule to *enforce* it. But I doubt not, The Precept in my *Text* is a sufficient Warrant. For tho' the *Jewish Institution* of a Sin-offering on a New-Year Day be *out of Date*; yet the general *Reason* of the Solemnity remains in full force. Christians are still to offer *spiritual Sacrifices*, tho' the Legal or Ceremonial be abrogated: and we have the *same occasion* as the *Jews* had, to solemnize the Beginning of the Year, by presenting these unto GOD. And will it not be our *Reproach*, to fall short of *Them* in Care of our Souls, and Duty to our great Master-Benefactor?

BUT (to say no more here) surely it can't be amiss to begin the *Year* with Religion; with which every *Week*, yea every *Day* shou'd commence. GOD is the *First* and *Best* Being, and the supreme Lord of all our Time: Hence the *First* of every Period and Season belongs to Him; and therefore *First-Fruits* of the yearly Revolution should be consecrated to his Glory and Service.

By the good Hand of our God upon us, We are now arriv'd to the Beginning of another year, according to the common Account. And as it falls out in Providence, our New-Year's Day is the Lord's Day, [is Sacrament-Day with us,] and so is filled with religious Dutys. Thus we begin the year with GOD, — Now the LORD keep this in the imagination of the Tho't of our Hearts, and establish our way before Him: and grant that the Services and Entertainments of the present Day may have good Influence on the whole succeeding Year: that, if we are spared this Year also, we may on the Sabbath, which will close the year, still feel the happy Impressions of this Sabbath, and have them abundantly increased..

THERE are special *Meditations*, religious *Temperances*, and *Actions*, which are eminently suitable to the season, & introduce the year withall. Wherefore I thought, to put you in Mind of These, and exhort you to them, would be a word in season. And the LORD grant it may be not only seasonable, but also profitable both to You and to Me, being mixed with Faith!

My Business now then is to direct you in, and exhort you to, a good Improvement of a New-year's

THE Method I shall go in is this; (1) I shall mention & recommend some things respecting the year past. (2) Others that respect the year beginning.

SOME think, this first Month has it's Name from *Janua* (the Latin for) a Door, because it is (as were the Door) the Opening or Beginning of a New-year.

year. But 'tis most commonly thought, it derives from *Fanus* (a famous Person in heathen Story, supposed to be the same with *Noah* in sacred History) who was wont to be painted with *two Faces*, which at once saw things past and future. — And agreeably *this Month* (that wears his name) has like him a *two-fold Aspect*, it points backward as well as forward. Accordingly the customary *Inscription* of the Year at present is *Double*; both the Year passing, and that advancing come into the usual Date of things. This may give us occasion, not improperly to take *both Years* under our consideration. Wherefore as propos'd before,

I. I shall instance in some *Dutys of Religion relative to the Year concluded*; that very properly challenge a place among the pious Exercises of a New-Year's Day. This indeed I wou'd defer to be the Matter of our Entertainment on the *finishing Sabbath* of the Year; but that I know not whether many opportunities shall be continued so long; and probably some of my *present* Hearers will *then* be gone down into the place of Silence. Therefore I shall prevent my self in saying,

1. *WE must look back on the Year concluded with solemn Repentance for the many Sins & offences of it.* We shou'd begin the present Year with Penitent Reflections on the Sins of the foregoing Year: our own sins, that is; for we are call'd *judge our selves*, and not others. Indeed we shou'd lay to heart, and sigh and weep for the Abominations committed by others; because of the Dishonour done thereby to the Name of GOD, and also that we may not partake of their Guilt & Doom,

that which I am now urging more especially, is a deep Self-abasement and Humiliation for our own *Personal* Miscarriages, particularly in the last Year. We must be sensible, that we are *daily* sinning more or less in Tho't, Word, & Deed, thro' the influence of corruption within and temptations without. The sorrowful *Experience* of the most improved Saints on earth speaks loudly to the truth of this. 'Twas the complaint of a humble Penitent, *My sins are more than the hairs of my head. Who can understand his errors?* — Doubtless, if we strictly *examine* the Records of Conscience, and take an impartial view of the frames of our heart, and the manner of our conversation in the Year past, We shall all find we've been (some in a greater, others in a lesser degree) making sad work for Repentance, and have heavy complaints to exhibit against our selves. *In many things we all offend.* In all things the very *Best* come vastly short of their just obligations. Are there not innumerable instances, wherein we can charge our selves, either with *Omission of*, or *Negligence in Duty*, or *Contradiction to it*? Can't we justly accuse our selves of greatly *wasting Time*, and frequently foregoing desirable opportunities of doing and getting good? — Has not a *quarter*-part of the Year at least with all, and nigh *half* with the generality been altogether *wasted* in our *Beds*? Truly it is a very humbling consideration, that we've been oblig'd, for the relief of our impatient Nature, entirely to lose so many valuable hours in *Sleep* as we have; But it is matter of more sad Reflection, that so much precious Time has by many been spent in *Sleep unnecessary* in indulgence of

the Flesh ; or *unseasonably*, as in the solemn Worship of GOD, to the dishonour of his Name, and the wounding of their own Souls. O that all who are guilty in this point wou'd seriously reflect, and grievously resent their Sin ! — But then we have in many *other* ways lost a great deal of our Time. It is to be fear'd, that *some* among us have in a manner *wholly* fool'd & squander'd away the Year, having been *idle every Day and all the Day*, as well as Night : Slothful & unprofitable Servants, who have *hid their Talents* in a Napkin, may have *wasted their Lord's Goods* in riotous living. Have not only done *nothing at all* for the honour of GOD, for the good of their Neighbor, or the salvation of their own Souls : but have done *much* to the *contrary* ; casting off Fear and restraining Prayer before GOD ; denying the LORD that bought them, and despising their own Souls ; walking after the Imagination of their evil hearts ; indulging themselves in vain Thoughts and vile Affections, corrupt Communication, and wicked Deeds ; being proud, passionate, covetous, or sensual, unclean, intemperate, unjust, uncharitable, & to every good work reprobate. Thus they've spent their Days in *Vanity*, and brought their Year to an end, *as a Tale that is told* †. A Tragical Story indeed ! — And as to *others* of us, who have not let the Year *altogether* run waste ; yet how *great Portions* of it have we thrown away in Idleness, Folly, and Impertinence ; and fill'd up no part of it (as we ought to, and might, have done) with profitable labour and industry. If we have not quite *flood still*, yet we've walk'd but *slowly* ; or gone in a

round of Duties, making no *progress*; and it may be, some have gone back from the LORD in too sad and shamefull degrees. — How many of us are here, who have done but *little work* this year, and got but *little good*, and but little improv'd the blessed means and seasons of grace we've so plentifully and undeservedly enjoy'd! Have we not many of us *loytered away* much of our Time, and yet numberless pretious Minutes, if not Days and Weeks, slip away in sloth and negligence, which might have been employ'd to excellent purposes in the worship and service of GOD, or in the work of our Generation? How often have we voluntarily neglected, or been needlessly diverted from holy Duties, Christian Conversation, and various good Works, which we have had opportunity for, and an outward Call, as well as inward impulse to? How have *Sabbaths* been trifled away, and lost? How have *Sermons* been forgotten or perverted? And *Sacraments* omitted or prophan'd? How have *Closet-devotions*, and *Family-Religion* been neglected, or carelessly attended and shuffled over? And how have *relative Dutys* been transgressed? How have the *various Providences* we've passed under, been unneeded or unprofitable? *Mercies* slighted and abused; *Afflictions* ill-resented and un-improv'd? In word, How have our Souls and Eternity been disregarded, the World pursu'd, Sense indulged, GOD dishonor'd, and the Devil gratify'd, by the transgressions of the wicked, the unfruitful walk of Christians, and the Apostasies of Professors! For some of the *Best* have liv'd to very *small* purpose, and bro't forth but little Fruit: So many *others* (we

We may fear) have liv'd to very *ill* purpose, bring
 forth Fruit to themselves, wild grapes, the grapes
 of *Sodom*, and clusters of *Gomorrha*. Have we no
 reason to lament, that there are some Professors, who
 have this Year miserably *fallen behind-hand*, and
 gone back in Religion, decay'd in Grace, and dis-
 inclin'd in their Zeal & Activity for GOD, Love
 his House and Day, Ordinances and Ministers, and
 the Communion of Saints! Are there not some, who
profess to know GOD; yet in *works have deny'd* him
 Being disobedient, proud, prophane, earthly, sen-
 sual; Careless about and formal in religious Duty
 disorderly in their walk, gradually leaving off
 to be wise and to do good, and frequently allow-
 ing themselves in those sinful neglects or vitious prac-
 tices, which (it may be) once they abhor'd & trem-
 bled at; securely venturing into the way of Tem-
 ptations, and patiently suffering the World, or the
 Flesh, by degrees to recover it's Dominion and leav-
 e them captive. It may be there are those here pre-
 sent, who having *begun in the spirit*, have en-
 dued *in the flesh*; who little thought in the Begin-
 ning of the Year, that such a fearful Change wou'd come
 upon them so soon. And if it had *then* been pre-
 nounced, what they wou'd be, and how they wou'd
Speak, and *behave* themselves before the Year's End
 they wou'd have said, *GOD forbid!* Be it far from
 me! *am I a Dog*, that I should do this abominable
 thing? — Oh! How treacherous & deceitful are
 our Hearts! How fickle & false, how variable &
 unsteady a Creature is Man! Unstable as water,
 carry'd about with every wind, an easy Prey to
 every Adversary; and never able to stand in

ur of Temptation, unless almighty Grace prevent,
train, support, and strengthen !

O *Let us all now consider our Ways*, look back
on the past Year, and weep over the manifold
scarriages of it. Thus, let the *Sinner & ungodly*
view his Life, and call to mind (as far as possible)
and lay to heart the many sins he has been guilty

O let there not be occasion for the LORD, to
new that Complaint (Jer. 8. 6.) *I hearkened and*
heard, but they spake not aright : No man repented
of his wickedness, saying, *What have I done ?*
It from an humbling Conviction that there is just
ground for it, seriously put *this Inquiry* to your
consciences; and accomplish a *diligent search*, that
possible you may find out all that has been amiss.
And when you remember all your Transgressions †,
wherewith you have displeased GOD and defiled
your selves, *Repent in sackcloth and ashes*, loathing
your selves in your own sight, ashamed of your
sins, and afraid of the Judgments of GOD, which
hang over your guilty Heads.

LET *Hypocrites* in Heart, that have been heap-
ing up wrath *, mocking GOD, flattering them-
selves, and deceiving others, by a plausible Pro-
fession, by specious Pretences, and external Perfor-
mances of Religion; being *Saints* in appearance
to Men; but *Sinners exceedingly before the Lord*;
say, let these *sinners in Zion be afraid* ||. May
their *iniquities surprize* the Hypocrites ! O let your
heart meditate the Terror, and your Ear hearken
to the Advice that is set before you in those applica-
& awfull words, (Acts 8. 21, &c.) *Thou hast neither*

Part, nor Lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the bo't of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.

LET Apostate Professors consider & bewail their sad Declensions; and tremble at that terrible word of the LORD, (Heb. 10. 38.) *If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*

LET the Children of GOD, whose Hearts are establish'd with Grace, also revive the memory of their Failings and Follies in the last Year, and renew their Repentance for 'em. Let every one make a Review, and see what has been the ordinary Temper of his Heart, and the general Tenour of his Life: and be greatly humbled for his unfruitfulness, unusefulness, and many mistakes and faults both of common infirmity and grosser aggravation; abundance whereof (no doubt) will come to mind upon diligent self-examination. O let us all deeply blush and mourn, in the Remembrance of what has been amiss in us. Let us be cover'd with a holy confusion of face, and fill'd with unfeigned Contrition of heart; and let us give glory to GOD, by the Renewal of our humble & penitent Confessions to him.

EVEN among Christians now (as well as among the Jews of old) there shou'd be a Remembrance of Sins every Year*, and our Remorse for them anew excited and express'd; and fresh application by Faith, made to the Blood of Atonement, for the confirmed Pardon of our sins, and the acceptance of our Repentance, former as well as latter.

* Heb. 10. 3.

THE Jews of old were to have their *annual day of Atonement*, notwithstanding the *daily* expiatory sacrifices preceeding: & it argu'd the *Invalidity* of the ceremonial oblations to take away Sin, that in them there was a Remembrance again made of sins every year. The *Repetition* of them did infer (and was occasion'd by) their insufficiency to *make the sinners thereunto perfect*; as the Apostle argues in *Rom. 10. 1, 2.* — But indeed now under the *Gospel*, we have a *better Sacrifice* *, which having been offer'd *once for all* †, is a sufficient Propitiation, not for our Sins only, but for the Sins of the whole world ‡, is of unceasing and unbounded Efficacy, and needs not to be *offer'd again*: nor need the *assisting Virtue* of it be more than once *apply'd* by GOD for the same Sin. Yet this do's not forbid the *repeated Exercises of Faith & Repentance*, nor render the *daily Recollection of Sins* improper or unnecessary. Such were the manifold *Defects* of our former Repentance (both as to the Extent and the Intensity of it,) that we may well *renew* our penitential Tears over *that*: And then, tho' the *Guilt* & damaging Efficacy of Sin repented of, be *perfectly* put away by a complete *Remission*: yet the *Stain* and *Impurity* is but *imperfectly* done away by *Mortification* & *Sanctification*; and moreover the Sin may re-appear in many *afflictive* evil *Effects*. Now these are matter of great *Humiliation*, & may well again the springs of Repentance, and make our hearts to flow afresh with godly Sorrow; and taken us to apply *anew* by *Faith* to the *Bloud* of Christ, for the Confirmation of our Pardon, and

Joh. 9. 23. † Chap. 10. 10. ‡ 1 Joh. 2. 2.

the gracious accepting of our Repentance past and present.

OF old on the New-Year's day, was the Feast of *Trumpets*; when with uncommon Solemnity the Jewish Priests, sounded (as some think *) *Ram's Horns*, in memory of *Isaac's* Deliverance, & a *Ram* being sacrificed in his room; which typify'd *CHRIST* the Mediator and Propitiatory Sacrifice. And the blowing the *Horn* might typify the Preaching of the *Gospel*, which calls Sinners to *repent*, and believe in *CHRIST*. I have therefore been doing but the proper work of a *New-Year's day*, in sounding the *Gospel-Trumpet*, and calling upon you to repent of Sin and fly to the Sacrifice of Atonement.

BUT so much for the *first* Head; which I have been the longer upon, because of the singular Importance of it; and it's Influence into the other religious Exercises of a *New-Year's-Day*: which I now proceed more briefly to speak of.

2. *WE shou'd make suitable Reflections on several Occurrences & Events of the Year.* We shou'd endeavour to recollect the various *Providence* which have passed over us, our Persons, Families, Relatives; and every remarkable Dispensation, public or private, wherein we have been any way interested; but especially such as were of mean concernment to us, We shou'd take a particular Notice of. ~~At this~~ Here I may say, ---

(1.) *WE shou'd look back on the Mercies of the Year with Gratitude & Praise.* We shou'd reflect on the several favourable Passages of the Year; and remember the Loving-kindness of the *LORD* according to

* *Godwyn's Moses & Aaron. pag. 136.*

ing to all His Mercies, which He hath bestowed on us. We shou'd magnify His Name with Thanks-giving, & not forget all His Benefits.--- In general, We shou'd adore the Divine *Patience* and *Goodness* towards us, in undeservedly lengthening out our Abode on Earth, and adding one Year more to the Days of the Years of our frail & sinful Lives. It is Fruit of the *Long-suffering* and Forbearance of good GOD, that we have yet a Standing in his Vineyard ! Such barren Trees & unprofitable Cumberers of the Ground might justly have been long since cut down, and cast (as proper Fuel) into the unquenchable Fire.--- O let us therefore take thankful Notice of the Divine Patience, in sparing us to the End of another Year.---Moreover, in particular, let us call to mind and be thankful for those many *Mercies* and Blessings, that the Year has been replenish'd withal, & whereby it has been brighten'd and sweeten'd unto us. *in the presents of the Lord*

THUS the Mercies of a *Temporal* Nature and external Reference should be gratefully remembred and acknowledged. Have the eyes of the LORD been upon us for good, from the beginning of the Year to the end thereof ? Has He crown'd the Year with His goodness, and fill'd it with the tokens of his favour on *civil, secular, & bodily* accounts ? Have we had the supports & comforts of Life continu'd to us ; success in our Trade and business granted us ; Happiness in Relations and neighbors ; quiet Habitations & convenient Dwel-ings ; the use of our Reason, the vigour of our Senses and soundness of our Limbs ? Have we had continu'd Ease, Health, and Strength of Body ? or

been rais'd up from Sickness, & recover'd of threatening Diseases? Have we been safely & comfortably carry'd thro' any other considerable Dangers and Distresses, and had the Divine Providence remarkably interposing for us in seasonable Succours, Preservations, and Deliverances? --- In a Word, Has it been a Year of Peace & Liberty, of Plenty and Prosperity with us? --- We must *remember these Things*; own the Hand of GOD, and acknowledge his Wisdom, Power, and Goodness in them, *with due Thankfulness*. We must adore and praise GOD as our constant Protector, and bountiful Benefactor, and give him the *praise & glory* of all that, which we have had the *Good & Comfort* of.

ESPECIALLY, Let us be thankful to GOD for *Spiritual Blessings*; Divine Mercies relating to our *Souls* and everlasting Concerns. Thus, has it been a Year of desirable *Opportunities* for our Souls. Have we had an uninterrupted Course of quiet and holy Sabbaths, the free and full Enjoyment of Sanctuary-Privileges & Entertainments; the Means of Grace in purity & plenty dispensed to us? --- We shou'd bless GOD for such invaluable advantages.

HAS it been a Year of blessed *Spiritual Experiences*; powerful strivings of the holy SPIRIT with us, and heavenly Impressions on our Souls? We shou'd especially bless GOD for such Mercies.

HAS this been the Year of our *Conversion* to GOD; the acceptable Year of the LORD, the Year of our Redemption, and the time of Love? O let us remember the loving-kindness of GOD our SAVIOUR, and rejoice in his good Work upon us, triumphing in the Praise of his rich & sovereign Grace abounding toward us.

OR has this been a Year of our special *Sanctifi-*
cation, and Consolation? Have we had the great
 Shepherd & Bishop of our Souls continually leading
 and feeding us; and by his powerfull Influences
 nourishing, and cherishing, and maturing us? Have
 we been increasing, with the Increase of GOD, and
 growing in Spiritual Knowledge, Faith, Holiness, &
 Comfort? Have we had special Communion with
 GOD in Ordinances & Providences? Have we re-
 ceiv'd any signal answers of Prayer; or experienc'd
 the fulfilment of Divine Promises in any remarkable
 instances? Have we been preserved from, or sup-
 ported under, and saved out of any peculiar Temp-
 tation to Sin or Error? Have we been reduced from
 initial Wandrings at any time? Have we been
 much quicken'd to the Duty of our respective Sta-
 tions and several Relations; been assisted, enlarged,
 and succeeded therein?— In a word, Have we
 had any singular opportunities of glorifying GOD,
 and serving our Generation; been spirited to im-
 prove them, and had Prosperity following our pious
 attempts?

VERILY, *these are Favours, which they can never*
ough be thankful for, who have been made the hap-
Subjects of them. O let us *ev ry one* consider
 what has been *our* Experience in these things: and
 wherein we have *tasted the loving kindness of the*
ord, (whether in this or that instance, & in what
 degree soever) let us, with the devout *Psalmist,*
upon our Souls, and all that is with n us to bless
Lord; and let us magnify his holy Name with
 thankful Hearts and joyfull Lips.— Thus the
Events of the Year are to be recorded & reflected
 on

on with *Gratitude & Praise*. And I might add here, not improperly ; What is the matter of our *Joy*s & *Praises*, as to the time past, let it be the *Encouragement*, of our *Hopes* for the future. " Let the last Year's *Experience* help to support and cherish this Year's *Expectations* ". He that *hath* delivered, we may trust *will* yet deliver, and still prevent us with the blessings of Goodness.

(2.) *W E* shou'd look back on the Troubles and Trials of the Year, with humble *Patience*, *Meekness* and *Submission*. Doubtless we have all had our Afflictions of one sort or other, in greater or lesser degrees. And as we shou'd recollect our *Mercies* ; so it is no less proper to recall our *Afflictions*. But then we must beware of all carnal Regret, Repining and Impatience (which we shall be much in danger of) under the remembrance of them. We must see & own the Hand of GOD in all the sad Occurrences of the Year ; and adore his Sovereignty, Holiness, Justice, Wisdom, and Goodness in them : and be reconciled to all Events, however cross & adverse.

THUS, has it been a Year of Trouble with us on *Spiritual* Accounts ? Have we been exercis'd with grievous Temptations ; have we been under the awful Withdraws of the Spirit of GOD, been left to Decays in Grace, and Falls into Sin, which have provoked GOD to hide his Face from us, and remove our Souls far off from Peace, and fill us with great Bitterness ? Have we had but little Communion with GOD ; little Assistance from GOD, and little Success in the Work & Service He has been calling us unto ? ——— In a word, Whatsoever Soul-troubles or Soul-distresses, we have been under ; these things

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Lam. 3.

we must recall to mind and lay to heart ; remembering our Affliction & our Misery, the Wormwood and the Gall. *My Soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me* *.

OR, has it been a Year of Trouble with us on *Temporal* Accounts ? Thus, Have we met with disappointments in Trade by Sea or Land ; has Business fail'd ; have Thieves robb'd, Debtors defrauded, or Creditors oppress'd us, and the like ? Have we received unkindnesses from Friends, or met with Crosses in Relations ? Have we suffer'd in our good Name, and been vexed with the strife of Tongues, and the scourge of lying Lips ? Have we been visited with Sickness in our Persons or Families ? Has Death come up into our Windows, to cut off our lovely Children ; to take away the Desire of our Eyes ; or Lover & Friend to put far from us, and our Acquaintance into Darkeness ?

IN short ; Whatever *Danger* or *Disaster* we've met with, We must see that all *proceedeth from the Lord*, and therefore hold our Peace, and not open our Mouths in any way of Murmuring and Complaint. Psal. 39. 9. *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth ; because thou didst it.* We must justify GOD in all his Proceedings, however (seemingly) harsh and rigorous ; and to the Glory of his Name acknowledge, with afflicted humble *Ezra*, --- *After all that come upon us for our evil deeds, Thou our GOD hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve* †.

3. *WE shou'd make our fervent Addresses to the Throne of Grace, in the way of Prayer : --- In-*

* Lam. 3. 19, 20. † Ezra 9. 13.

treating, that GOD wou'd *pardon all the Sins* of the Year past and of our whole Life, and not remember them against us: that old Guilt may be purged away, now we are entring on a New-Year. Again, That he would *accept* us in all the *Services* of the Year; that our spiritual Sacrifices, and all the good Deeds, which by the help of his Grace we have done, or desired to do, for the honor of his Name, and serving of our Generation, may be accepted in his sight. So *Nehemiah* pray'd; † Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy. Remember me, O my God, for good. --- Finally, That the good Impressions of the Year may *remane*; that the Ordinances and Providences (whether mercifull or afflictive) wherein we have met with GOD, may have a *fresh* and *lasting* Influence on our Souls; that the good Effects of them may abide, and our spiritual Experiences not be forgotten nor become usefess to us: But that we may always reap some benefit and advantage from them. --- Such Petitions as these, we must put up to GOD, relating to the Year past; therewith *acting Faith* in *JESUS CHRIST*, for the application of his cleansing Blood, and the communication of his sanctifying and comforting Spirit, for these ends. --- But, thus much may suffice to have been said concerning the time past, and the duties *reflex*.

I proceed in the next place,

II. TO instance in some prospective Dutys; Religious Frames and Exercises, relative to the Year-advancing.

† Neh. 13. 22, 31.

THUS, in the 1st. place, *We must make a serious*
dedication of our selves to the Service of GOD, with
the most solemn Resolutions to live unto his Glory
more than ever. This is what a grateful sense of
 Divine Goodness to us in the past Years of our
 lives, as well as the consideration of Duty & Inte-
 rest, shou'd engage us unto. I beseech you therefore,
 Brethren, by the Mercies of GOD, that ye present
 your Bodies, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to
 GOD; which is your reasonable service: and be
 not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed
 by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove
 what is the good will of GOD †. If the LORD spare
 this Year also, he will come seeking Fruit from
 us; and we must give an Account unto Him. We
 shou'd therefore be engaging our selves to that Duty,
 which He requires, by the bonds of holy Resoluti-
 ons. We must, by lively acts of Devotion, conse-
 crate all the Powers of Soul & Body, all our Strength,
 Time, and Talents to the use and honour of
 our great LORD and Master; resolving to be *His*,
 wholly, only, and continually; resolving to redeem
 our Time, to be fruitful in every good word and
 work; and to glorify him in all things thro' JESUS
 CHRIST. We must particularly oblige our selves
 to sincere and solemn Vows, to endeavour the Re-
 formation of our selves and our Families from, and
 be watchful against, all those Sins which we
 have been most incident & inclined to; to take up the
 practice of those Duties we've hitherto omitted, and
 come into a speedy attendance on those Ordinances
 we've hitherto neglected; to be more vigorous in

Rom. 12. 1, 2.

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those

those Performances, which heretofore we have been too apt to trifle in : to be diligent in the discharge of those Trusts of any consequence, which we may be now in the exercise or expectation of : and faithful in the Improvement of all those Opportunities of doing or receiving Good, which we may probably look to meet with, in the several Stations and Relations we hold among Men. In a word, we shou'd *devote to GOD*, to his use and service, *the whole ensuing Year*, and all the days and moments of it : unfeignedly desiring that they may all some how improv'd to his Glory ; and resolving that we will live to his Praise more than ever heretofore ; will be more zealous for his Interest, & more zealous of good Works ; more laborious & constant in working out our own Salvation, as well as doing good to our Generation : reserving no secret Lust of the mind or of the flesh to be gratify'd, nor grudging any Pains, and boggling at no Difficulty, that we may serve, please and glorify GOD, win CHRIST, and finish the course of this Year with Joy, if we shou'd live to see the Period of it. — But Oh ! how *improbable* is this, as to some of us at least ? This may be the *last* Year of our Lives ; it may be so to many of us ; none, but the GOD of Life, knows who will this Year be called to die. O let us seriously entertain this Tho't. — The Conclusion of one Year more shou'd put us upon thinking of the Conclusion of all our Years : And this Reflection shou'd quicken us (methinks) to *begin well* the Year advanced, as not knowing but that it may be our dying Year, and therefore to resolve with holy *Job*, that *all the days of our appointed time we will wait till*

change shall come, in a daily expectation of it, and a diligent preparation for it; doing with might what our hands find to do, referring to the Glory of GOD, to our own or others Good.--- O let us not stir out of these Doors, without such pious Resolves, and such solemn act of self-Dedication. "This shou'd be the Axis and Centre of every Year's Revolution. Have any of you had any *good Purposes* and Resolutions in your minds, the prosecution whereof has *hitherto* been delay'd? Put it off *no longer*. Is the House of GOD yet to be *set up* in your hearts, the work to be begun? Begin it *to day*, as *Moses* did, *who on the first day of the first month set up the Tabernacle*. Are there things amiss with you to be amended, Corruptions to be purged out, and things wanting to be set in order? Begin *this day* to *reform*, as *H Ezekiah* did, *who on the first day of the first month began to sanctify the House of the Lord*: So will you make this Day in the best manner remarkable, and this Year comfortable †.

2. *W E shou'd be mindfull of the Changes, that are liable to; and begin the Year with a holy Fear and Trembling, not knowing the things that shall fall us.* As to our *Spiritual* Concerns, we should look forward with a *godly jealousy*, a humble Self-confidence and Self-suspicion; considering that the way we have to go, is through an *Enemies* Country; and knowing how apt we are to stumble and fall, and how easily ensnar'd by Temptations,

Mr. Henry's England's Hopes, A Sermon preach'd on New Year's Day.

which surround us continually. *Who knows* what Snares the Enemy has laid for him this Year; what Temptations may assault him; and into what Sins he may fall, to the dishonour of GOD, and the wounding of his own Soul? *Who knows*, what Troubles of Conscience and Anxieties of mind he may be left to; what decays in Grace and losses of Comfort he may suffer? We should endeavour to fear the *worst*, as to avoid *Security*; and yet so to hope the *best*, as not to *sink* into *Despondency*. Be not *high-minded*, but *fear*. Fear falling into Sin; fear falling under GOD's Displeasure. *Happy* is the man, that thus *feareth always*.---Again, as to our *Temporal* Concerns, we shou'd begin the Year with very *humble* Prospects; knowing, that our *Times are in GOD's hand*, and that he changeth the Time according to his sovereign Pleasure; knowing that the Fashion of this World *passeth away*; and that we have *forseited* all our Enjoyments into the hands of Divine Justice; and therefore may well look for dark and afflictive Revolutions of Providence. Have we the World at present *smiling* on us? Are we in Health and Ease and Esteem? Business growing, Family flourishing, Relatives and Neighbours comfortable, and every Circumstance affording very bright and hopeful Prospects to us? Yet we shou'd beware of securely *trusting* in Worldly Enjoyments, or vainly *flattering* our selves with *Worldly Hopes*. *Trust not in uncertain Riches*. Say not in your Prosperity; I shall never be moved; or, I shall die in my nest. Say not; We will go into such a *City*, and continue there a *Year*, and buy and sell, and get gain: For ye know not what shall

be on the morrow †. Say not; Soul, eat, drink and be merry; Thou hast Goods laid up for *many Years*: since thy Soul may *this night* be required of thee. Boast not thy self of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth. In a little while your Riches and Worldly Goods may *take to themselves wings* and fly away, and leave you: or *Death* will come, and carry you away from them; and then *whose shall all these things be?* In that very day all your Thoughts and Hopes about this World shall perish, and all your earthly Comforts be taken from you. O let the *Rich* and Covetous consider this; and not set their hearts on that which is not. Let the *Brisk* and Voluptuous consider this; and not dwell carelessly, putting far from them the evil day. Let such as are *Young* and beginning the World consider this; and not labour to be rich nor seek great things for themselves: but lay their Expectations & Desires low; remembering the days of *Darkness*, which shall be many.

3. *THERE* must be a mixture of Hope, and Trust in GOD. Hope & Fear must be kept on a balance. *Amazing Dread* is to be avoided, as well as *Presuming Confidence*. We must be so apprehensive of Changes, as not to grow secure: and yet we must maintain a good *Hope thro' Grace*; not casting away our humble Confidence. We must not be so afraid of Evil Tidings, as to be *dispirited* and despondent. We must not let our Fears so prevail, as to silence our Prayers, or weaken our Hands in Duty, and interrupt us in our Work. We must encourage our selves in the Lord, as David * in his

distress did; and fetch relief from the Divine *Promises*, when Dangers look us in the face, or Burdens lie on our backs. We should *realise the Truth* of those great & pretious *Promises* which GOD hath given us in His Word; and look forward with *Satisfaction* in the Goodness, Power, and Wisdom of Divine *Providence*; to the watchful Care whereof, we must in well-doing commit our selves: *entrusting* GOD with *all our Concerns* Temporal and Spiritual, Personal and Relative. In the fairest and most *pleasing* Prospects, *owning* His Sovereign Dominion, and having all our Relyance on His *Providence & Promises*; but *renouncing* all Creature-Dependencies. And in the *darkest* Views and Appearances of things still keeping up a chearful *Trust* and humble *Hope* in GOD; being quiet from the inordinate fear of Evil; and anxiously careful about nothing: Having our hearts fixed, trusting in the LORD, and waiting for His Salvation. We must act Faith on *all* the Promises of GOD; but especially those great and pretious Promises, wherein we are assured, that *the LORD is a Sun and a Shield*, that He will give Grace & Glory, and withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly; and that all things shall work together for good to them which love GOD. *Psal. 84. 11. Rom. 8. 28.*

4. *THERE* must be a hearty Resignation to the Will of GOD, as to the Events that may be in the womb of Providence. We must lay our selves, and all our's, at the foot of Divine Sovereignty; submit all that we have and are to the Divine Disposal, and resolve to acquiesce in every Allotment of our heavenly Father; "to follow the Spirit of GOD in all

our Affections, & the Providence of GOD in all our Affairs, whatever He shall appoint us to, this Year †. We must *commit our Wayes to the Lord*, and cast all our care on him, who performeth all things for us; stedfastly purposing to welcome the will of GOD in all His Dealings with us, respecting either our Souls and the concerns of our spiritual State, or our Bodies & the circumstances of our outward Condition. We must *resign all our Interests*, and refer all our Cares unto Him. We must sacrifice to GOD our Persons, Lives, Names, Estates, Families, even all our *Enjoyments*, and all our *Hopes*; resolving to be *satisfy'd* whether it be a Year of Troubles, and Trials, or of Peace and Joy. Come Sickness, or Health; Confinement, or Liberty; Pain, or Ease; Poverty, or Plenty; Loss, or Gain; Reproach and Disgrace, or Reputation and Preferment; Sorrow & Mourning, or Consolation & Rejoycing; Death & Bereavements, or continuance of Life and increase of our Offspring; Crosses, or Comforts in Neighbours & Relations, &c. In a word, whatever comes, we must resolve to be *easy*, and to *welcome* every Occurrent however evil; endeavoring after the same *resigned* frame as David was in when he uttered those words, (2 Sam. 15. 25, 26.) — *If I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his habitation. But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee: behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.*

† See Mr. Matth. Henry's Life. Chap. 5. Which the Reader will do well to read often, and where he may find several Hints that are offer'd in this Discourse.

5. *THERE must be the exercises of a lively Faith in JESUS CHRIST.* We must go forth in His Righteousness & Strength, from a conviction of our own Unrighteousness, Unworthiness & Weakness. We must act faith on CHRIST for all that Wisdom & Grace, which we may need in doing the Work, and bearing the Afflictions of the Year; in fulfilling the Resolutions we have made, & resisting the Temptations we may meet withall. We must rely on Him for His holy SPIRIT, to accompany our Ordinances & Providences, and sanctify them unto us. We must rely on His Merits for acceptance with GOD in our present acts of Devotion, and in all the future Performances & Works of the Year. In a word, We must by an eye of faith have a view to CHRIST, as the meritorious & the efficient Cause, in all our hopes of needful Benefits for ourselves or our's; and of His fulness we must expect to receive the Blessings we ask for. We must look on the Promises as founded in the Mediator; and desire to receive all our supports and comforts from them, through His hand.

6. And lastly, *THERE must be earnest Prayer to GOD, with respect to the ensuing Year.* There are many Errands to the Throne of Grace, many Petitions proper to be put up on the present occasion. Here to give a few hints briefly; —

As to our selves, personally consider'd; we shou'd pray that the hand of our GOD may be upon us for Good, from the beginning of the Year to the end thereof. We shou'd pray with submission to the Will of GOD, that He wou'd provide for us, to our outward man; that He wou'd smile upon

our worldly Affairs & Concerns; that He wou'd
 daily follow us with His Benefits, and crown the
 Year with His Goodness; that it may be a Year of
 continu'd Health, Peace, Liberty, Plenty, Success in
 our Callings, and Prosperity in all our lawful De-
 signs & Undertakings: and that all our Blessings
 may flow to us from Covenant-Love; that we may
 see & enjoy GOD, and taste His special Favour in
 the fruits of His common Bounty. — Or however
 we must pray that GOD wou'd *prepare* us, if it is to
 be a Year of *Trials* and *Troubles*; whether Personal
 Troubles in Mind or Body, Name or Estate;
 Family-Troubles; or Publick Grievances:
 whatever be the Affliction or Afflictions which Pro-
 vidence has designed for us, that we may be *firm*
 therefor; and enabled to endure them *patiently*, as
 well as to improve them *fruitfully*: and to do the
 duty of every new Condition we may be brought
 to. — We must pray, that *the Presence* of
 GOD may be afforded to us, His spiritual & graci-
 ous Presence: that GOD wou'd be with us through
 the Year, and keep us in all the way we have to go:
 that He wou'd continue to us the Means of Grace,
 and all our pretious advantages for our Souls; and
 enable us to make a wise & faithful Improvement
 of them: That He wou'd add His special Blessing
 to the Means, and make them effectual for saving
 us unto us. — Thus, *Sinners* Unregenerate shou'd
 pray, that this may be the happy Year of their
conversion: Yea, that this *first* day of the Year may
 be the day of *God's Power* upon them; that now they
 may be made a *willing* People, a *peculiar* People to
 GOD; that *old* things may pass away, and all things
 become

become *new* within them: that they may have a *new Heart*, and lead a *new Life*; and may no longer spend their Years in *Vanity*, nor consume their Days in *Wrath*.--- So the *Saints* of the most High shou'd pray, that this may be to them a Year of eminent *Growth* in every *Grace*, of Progress in universal *Holiness*, of much *Communion* with GOD, and special *Usefulness* in their respective Places & Relations. We shou'd pray, that in the diligent attendance to Ordinances & Duties we may this Year be *built up* in CHRIST, receive more of the Spirit in His Gifts & Graces, as well as *Comforts*; and be advanced Heaven-wards: also that in the prudent and faithful use of all our Opportunities, we may bring much Glory to our GOD, & be Blessings to our Generation, That GOD wou'd restrain us from every Sin; more & more mortify our Lusts; fortify us against Temptations; and furnish us to every good Thought, Word, and Work. That He wou'd help us to acknowledge Him in all our Ways, and serve Him in all our Capacities according to His will, That He wou'd ordain to *Himself* special Honour from us, and to the *World* special Benefit. That we may be ready to all good Works; and even our common Actions after a godly manner, the Name of CHRIST, as well as for the Glory of GOD; and fill up our whole Time with Work, *the Duty of every Day requires*: that if we live the close of this Year we may be able to give a better Account of it, than we can of the last.--- And if this shou'd, by the will of GOD, be the Year of our Death, and the End of our appointed Time (as probably it will with some of us) that we

be found about our *Master's work*; ready to be offer'd, and willing to die; and may enter into our *Master's joy*. In a word, It shou'd be our Hearts Desire & Prayer, that *CHRIST* may be magnify'd in us, whether it be by Life or Death; and that whether present or absent *we may be accepted of the Lord*. Thus as to our selves.—— Again, As to our *Families & Friends*, this is a proper time to recommend them to *GOD's Blessing* with a peculiar solemnity. We shou'd in Prayer seriously wish a good Year to all our Domesticks, all our Relatives, and Acquaintants, as well as our selves. Now it is a fit Season in a more solemn manner to bless our household, and pray for our Relations and Friends, our Parents, our Consorts, our Children, our Neighbours; even all that are near and dear to us: to resign them unto *GOD* by lively acts of Faith, and commit them to the Divine Keeping & Blessing by fervent Prayer.—— Further, As to the *Church of CHRIST* in the World; now is a fit opportunity to be more large & solemn in our Intercessions for this: that the Year of the *Lord's Redeemed* may be hasten'd, and the Time of *Reformation* come, the Time of *Refreshment* from the Presence of the *LORD*, and the Year of *Enlargement*.—— Again, as to our *Nation & Country*, that it may be to them a Year of Peace, advancement in Happiness, & Glory. So, as to the particular *Town & Church* which we belong to; that it may be a good Year unto them, a Year of Tranquillity and Prosperity. That the *Town* may have a Year of Health, and Success, and be made to flourish in all it's Interests: that the *Church* may have added to it daily such as shall be saved; and that the

the *Officers & Members* of it may be under the special Conduct & Blessing of the *great Bishop* of Souls walking together in the Fear & Favour of GOD, in the Faith & Order of the Gospel, and in the Comforts of the Holy Ghost.

THUS I have in some imperfect manner gone thro' what was proposed; and have set before you some of those religious Frames & Exercises, which are especially seasonable on a New-Year's Day.

AND now what remains? But that we all apply what has been said, and put these Rules in practise. O that there were such an Heart in us! That we might every one be persuaded & enabled thus to begin the Year with GOD; every Year, and the advancing Year particularly.

To excite hereunto, consider, —

1. *THIS is most highly Reasonable.* Every Act and Exercise, that hath been directed to, is at all times our *reasonable Service*; and at such a time as this peculiarly *seasonable*. Indeed the Work is in general the common Business of every Day: However, this hinders not but that it may be the more solemn Employment of some *special Days* in the Year. And so indeed it ought to be. Not only the first Day in every *Week* (tho' this indeed especially ought to be thus devoted to religious Exercises: but also the Beginning of every *Month*, and the Beginning of every *Year* are very *fit* seasons for the like Employment. "It is but fit & just that GOD, who is the *First*, should have the *First*, and be first served. The Heathen could say, *A FOVE* *Erincipium*; Begin with GOD, whatever you do.

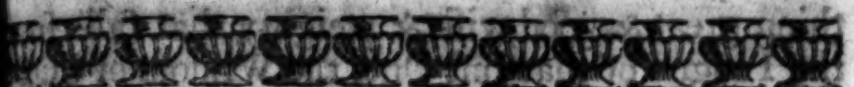
2. *THIS*

2. *THIS* will be of very *Profitable Tendency*; and afford us the best Prospects, as to the ensuing Year. 'Tis the general Salutation of the Day, I wish you a happy New-Year. This is what I seriously and heartily wish you all; and in Token of my good Wishes, I have entertain'd you with such Discourse at this Time; in which I have directed you to one of the most excellent *methods* to obtain the happy Year we wish one another.

Thus to begin the Year with GOD, is the most hopeful way to render it a good and holy, a prosperous and comfortable Year. This is a way to engage our selves to spend the Year with GOD, in his Service and for his Glory. It is a proper and very effectual means to keep up a lively Zeal for GOD, to keep us close to Duty, to make us wise in the improvement of our Time, and quicken us to an unwearied activity in doing the Work of the Year. Moreover, This is a way to engage the special Presence of GOD to be with us through the Year; which is the Source of all true Prosperity, and which we have absolute need of, to direct and protect us in all our Ways, to assist and succeed us in all our undertakings, to supply our Wants, and sweeten our Enjoyments, to support us under Afflictions, and make every Event (whether prosperous or adverse) to work together for our real (that is spiritual) Good. These Benefits are the desirable fruits of the Divine Presence; and what, a good beginning of the Year has a happy Tendency to secure unto us.

Let us take the Advice then given (in Job 22.21.)
acquaint now thy self with him, and be at peace thereby

thereby Good shall come unto thee. Let us begin the Year with GOD, sincerely applying our selves to the Work before us, and giving diligence therein: so shall we take a sure method to obtain a good and happy Year, if we live; and a blessed Eternity, if we die. If we now give up our selves to GOD in CHRIST, and continue walking with him, in all his Ordinances & Commandments, we shall spend our Days, not under the Wrath and Rebukes of GOD, but under his gracious Conduct, Smile and Blessing: and shou'd it be our dying Year, we shall end our Days in his Favour, shall finish our Course with Joy, and be received into the Heavenly Paradise, where there is neither Beginning of Days nor End of Years; where there is no more Death, neither Sorrow, nor Crying, nor any more Pain, but an uninterrupted Eternity of perfect Happiness and Glory. This will be our Crown and Reward. This is our blessed Hope. O let us be looking, longing and preparing for it. And as the Apostle exhorts, Heb. 4. 11, 16. Let us labour to enter into that Rest: -- For which end, Let us come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Heb. 3. 13, 14. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily while it is called; To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.



A SERMON Preach'd

ON THE

Last Day of the Year.

JOHN VII. 37.

In the last day, that great day of the Feast, Jesus stood, and cryed, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.

Shall for brevity's sake wave the Formality of a *Preface*; and immediately take these Words under Consideration. In which we may —

I. OBSERVE the *Person* speaking, i. e. *Jesus*; The Eternal SON of GOD, incarnate in our Nature: the great Teacher Prophet, the true & faithful Witness; whose Sayings are faithful sayings, and worthy of all Acceptation. — It is *He*, that now speaks: they are *His* words; they are *gracious* Words proceeding out of the Mouth of Him that is True, and whose Lips are *Well of Life*. Let us therefore *believe* what is said, and be affected with it. Surely it must be something

thing great & good, wise & weighty, that falls from the Tongue of that Just One, the Wisdom of GOD.

II. OBSERVE the *Speech* it self; which is an *Invitation* to thirsty Souls, to come unto CHRIST, & drink.--- (I.) Observe the *Persons* invited; namely, All those that *thirst*, i. e. are concern'd about and desirous of the Salvation of their Souls --- He invites *Such* as thirst. Now this Thirsting implies several things. As, a *Sense* of *Indigency*; Those that thirst, feel their want of Refreshment.--- Also an *Appetite* and *Craving*: a making out & reaching after some suitable Good to supply the Wants of the Soul. Such as thus are spiritually athirst, our Saviour speaks to in the Text. Yea, *all* such. The Invitation is *general* and *indefinite*;--- If *any* man *Man* is the Object of this Invitation; not *Devils*. O astonishing *Distinction* of Sovereign Grace! --- *Any* man, that thirsts, is invited. O amazing *Extent* of Divine Mercy!--- The *Rock*, that so plentifully gush'd out refreshing Water to the *Israelites* in the parched Wilderness, was a *Figure* and *Type* of CHRIST; and *every one* had liberty to drink of that Rock*. Even thus the waters of Life, that flow from the Spiritual Rock, are *free* for any man that is thirsty. Not the *worst* & most *unworthy* Person is excepted. *All* that find their want, and desire a supply, are here invited. In CHRIST there is *enough* for all; and the *Offer* takes in all. None are excluded, but such as *shut out themselves* by *Unbelief*. No *thirsty* Soul need doubt of a welcome Reception with CHRIST;--- O happy News to poor self-condemned distressed Sinners! He

* 1 Cor. 10. 4.

would we *admire* the Riches of *free Grace*! And how shou'd we love and honour the *Gospel*, which brings to us these glad Tidings of great Joy? — In the next place, (2) Observe *what* these thirsty souls are invited to; *i. e.* To *come & drink*. [1] Here is a *Duty* requir'd; namely, To *come* unto *CHRIST*. This implys an entertaining his Doctrines; laying hold on his Righteousness; a putting our lives under his Government; a submitting to his discipline, &c. This coming to *CHRIST* implys a believing on Him, a receiving of Him in all his Mediatorial Offices, and a relying on Him for Pardon, Grace, & Glory. — We must thus come to *CHRIST* Faith. We must see & own *CHRIST*, to be the Fountain of living Waters. We must feel our need of Him; We must depend on him, and seek to him (and no other) to be a Fountain of Life unto us. The Invitation from *CHRIST* is, *Let him come unto me*. So Mat. 11. 28. *Come unto ME, all ye that labour and are heavy laden*. Come to *CHRIST*, who is the *Fountain open*; the *Rock smitten*; from whence issue streams, which make glad the City of *GOD*. — Go not to the *World*; for this || is nothing but Vanity & Vexation of Spirit. Go not to *Philosophy*; for this † is full of vain Deceit & killing Poison. Go not to the *Law*; for this † is but a shadow, and cannot make the Comers thereunto perfect. These Things can neither cleanse nor appease the Conscience of a thirsty Sinner. *Whither should he go, but to CHRIST?* With whom are the words of eternal Life †. [2] Here is another made, a Promise of Satisfaction given. Come

*Eccel. 1. 14. † Col. 2. 8 * Heb. 10. 1. † Joh. 6. 68*

M

unto

unto Me, and *Drink* : *q. d.* Come, and I will give you to drink : Come to Me, & you shall be supply'd & satisfy'd. Ask of Me, and I will give you living water, Joh. 4. 10. --- O what great *Encouragement* here given to poor thirsty Sinners ! Blessed be our GOD & Saviour for this *precious Promise* : and that by his Grace we might be enabled to lay hold on this Hope set before us.

III. OBSERVE the *Posture & Manner*, in which *Jesus* deliver'd this Invitation : He stood, and cried saying, If any man, &c. The Jewish Teachers us'd to sit, when they taught publickly : and this was general Custom with *Jesus* likewise. But now he chang'd his Posture, (perhaps) to accommodate his Voice, & express his Earnestness. Our Saviour at the time was much mov'd ; was fervent in Spirit : and cry'd aloud, standing up, that all might hear & mind what he was saying : as well as to show that He was not ashamed nor afraid to proclaim Himself, as the Fountain of Life, in the midst of the Pharisees, and Doctors, his greatest Enemies. The Matter of his Speech was of infinite Importance and the last Concern to all. He himself was deeply affected with sense hereof ; and really solicitous that all might be under the like Impression. This made him earnest in his speaking on this occasion : this made him stand up, that all might behold & hear him. O the astonishing Love and Compassion there is in CHRIST unto perishing Souls ! What manner of Love is this, that the SON of GOD, the LORD of Glory, shou'd stoop to beseech rebellious Sinners ; and be so importunate with them, to come unto him, that he may supply all their wants, & make them happy

or ever! --- And how amazing the *Stupidity* of sinners, that we must be *intreated*, urg'd, and importun'd to accept his gracious Offers and yield to his blessed Designs of everlasting Kindness towards us!

IV. OBSERVE the *Occasion*, and *Time*, when this invitation was made: *in the last day, that great day of the Feast.* --- The Feast here spoken of, was the feast of *Tabernacles* *. The Reason of this Title is †, because all the time of this Feast the People remain'd in *Tents*, and *Booths*, made of Boughs after the manner of *Arbours*. This was an *Annual* Scriminity, and was kept in the *Close* of the Year (according to the common or civil Computation among the Jews) when the Harvest was fully ended; hence it is also call'd, *The Feast of Ingathering, which is in the end of the Year* *. One principal *Design* of this Institution was to *remember* the Jews of their *fore-fathers* dwelling in *Tents* and their unsettled state in the *Wilderness* ‖; to *bumble* them by this reflection; and to call forth their *Praises* of GOD, for the gracious Conduct & Protection afforded to their *Fathers* when tabernacled in the *Wilderness*, as also for the happy Settlement, the more convenient Habitations and sure Dwellings now vouchsafed them. The *Jews* were at this Feast to dwell in *Tents*, that they might know a little by their own Experience, what their *Fathers* endur'd; and that they might learn to value more the Mercy of GOD to them in the Comforts of their own fixed and commodious dwellings.

Joh. 7. 2. † Godwyn's Moses & Aaron. pag. 136.

Exod. 23. 16. --- 34. 22. ‖ Pool on Lev. 23. 34.

BUT furthermore, Another special *Design* of this sacred appointment was to stir them up to a *thankful* acknowledging of the Divine *Goodness*, where with the *Year* (which now they were come to the Period of) had been encompass'd †. It was instituted, as a solemn *Thanksgiving* unto GOD for the Harvest and Vintage newly gather'd in ; to put them in mind, that the Mercies they had received were all from the Divine Providence : and that unto this they must look, for the like supplies in the Year ensuing.

HENCE infer ; We shou'd sometimes seriously look back upon & consider the *Hardships* and Difficulties our *Fore-fathers* met with, in their coming to and settling in this Land : we shou'd call to mind their mean Circumstances and desolate Condition ; and be very humble in our own eyes when we remember our low Beginnings.

AGAIN, I might observe to you, That the great *Goodness* of GOD to our *Fore-fathers* in bringing them safe to this Land, planting them in it, protecting and prospering of them, &c. should sometimes be thankfully commemorated by us their Posterity. And the consideration of what Straits & Hardships they conflicted with, shou'd put an Edge on our Gratitude, and make us very thankful for the Comforts and Accommodations we do so liberally partake of, tho' much more unworthy than our Predecessors.

BUT the Observation that I shall here most insist on, is this, That as every Year ends, We shou'd do something like observing the Feast of Tabernacles In-gathering. Gospel-Duty was of old prophesied

† Deut. 16. 13.

of under this Notion; as we read, *Zech. 14. 16.* It shall come to pass, that every one--- shall even go up from Year to Year to worship the King the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. Now it may be instructive and profitable to us, a little to consider, and apply the *Laws* of this Feast. Wherefore I shall offer a few Hints here. Thus, It was one Law of this Feast (in common with several others *) that *all the Males* shou'd go up to *Jerusalem*, (and they often carry'd their Wives and Families with them †: Thither the Tribes went up, the Tribes of the LORD to the Testimony of Israel) to worship GOD in the Place and Way of his Appointment. Thither they went thrice in the Year: and this, that by often meeting together in one Place they might contract a more intimate Acquaintance with, and greater Affection to one another: and by often joyning together in the same Acts of religious Worship, they might increase their holy Communion, as the People of GOD, as well as keep pure & entire all those Ordinances that were deliver'd to them, & faithfully hand down the same to Posterity.— Again, At this Feast they were to appear before the LORD GOD, the God of Israel; as just Debtors, to pay their thankful Acknowledgements to Him for the Mercies lent them: As humble Petitioners, to ask those further Benefits they needed: As obedient Subjects, to own his Dominion over them, and to receive his Commands: As Friends & peculiar People, to renew the Covenant and League of Amity & Love between them; eyeing Him, as the GOD of Israel, even their Cove-

* Deut. 16. 16. † 1 Sam. 1. 7. || Exod. 23. 17.

nant-GOD. Moreover, Then they were to appear before GOD, in the public *Tabernacle*, or the *Temple*; which were instituted Types of *CHRIST*, the Mediator: in and through whom GOD is well-pleased with the Prayer of Faith & Labour of Love.— Another Law was, that *none* shou'd appear before the LORD *empty* *; not empty-hearted, but with Souls full of Grace & Gratitude towards GOD: not empty-handed, but *every man must give* to the needy, *as he is able*, according to the *Blessing of the LORD* upon him †, a free-will-offering, in testimony of his gratefull respect to GOD, his Benefactor, and the Poor's Patron. — Again, At this Feast they were to offer *Sacrifices* in *Abundance*; Burnt-offerings of Praise every day, with Meat-offerings and Drink-offerings in proportion attending them; also Sin-offerings and Peace-offerings were added; beside the Common Sacrifices of the New Moon, and the Offerings made continually every Morning & Evening. Thus they were to be much in Communion with GOD, and to abound in the Duties of religious Worship all the days of this Feast. As this Month was honor'd with as many *Feasts* as were celebrated in all the Year besides: so there were more *Sacrifices* to be offer'd at *this Feast*, than at any other because this Feast was in the *Close* of the Year, when it was meet to supply the Defects of the Year past and when they had gather'd in all their Fruits and therefore ought to make larger Returns & Acknowledgments to GOD. — Again, These days of abundant Offerings were to be days of abundant Re-

* Deut. 16. 16. Neh. 8. 10. † Deut. 16. 17. † Pool, and Dr. Jackson on Num. 25. 13. &c. †

Rejoicings. They were to feast very *cheerfully* together before the LORD their GOD, *Rejoycing* in the thankful sense of his great Goodness to them in the Year past, as well as in *Hope* of the like Goodness to crown the Year coming on *. They were to express their Joy by Feasting, Thanksgivings, and Songs of Praise; also (as some think †,) by carrying in their hands green Boughs of goodly Trees; which appears to have been a usual Expression of Joy and a Token of Triumph upon other Occasions.

Another Law of this Feast was, that they should *desert* their pleasant and secure *Houses*, and dwell in moveable uncomfortable *Booths* or Huts for seven days ‡, which (as it was typical of the Incarnation of CHRIST, who was about this time of Year to come into the World & pitch his Tent among men, dwelling in a Tabernacle of Flesh †, so it might be for other Ends and Reasons; particularly [not to repeat those before-mention'd] it) was design'd to exercise their Self-denial, & teach them a Contempt of the World: It might also allude to, & be intended to mind them of, their mutable condition, being strangers on Earth; & the Frailty of their Bodies, that were their Souls earthly Tent or Tabernacle, and in a few days to be dissolved: By which mortifying Reflection, together with their humbling Concomitment to contemptible & unpleasant Booths in the open Air for their Habitations, the Joy of the solemnity was suitably temper'd & corrected: for which end also, that is to qualify and sanctify their

Deut. 16. 15. † Henry, & Jackson, on Levit. 23. 40.

Neh. 8. 14. † Job. 1. 14. † 1 Cor. 5. 1.

Mirth,

Mirth, they were to read the Law of GOD*, in a solemn manner upon this occasion.

Thus we see in part what were the Laws of this Feast of Tabernacles or In-gathering, and in some measure the Meaning of them. Now since Gospel-Day is represented in the fore-mention'd Prophecy of New Testament Times, under the notion of *keeping the Feast of Tabernacles*, this intimates what GOD expects from Christians, even that all those Graces be brought into Exercise and exhibited in their Lives, which were especially acted and signify'd in this Feast of old. Likewise, since this Feast was observ'd among the Jews in the End of the Year (according to the civil Calculation of their Year) and since it was prophesy'd, that Christians under the Gospel shou'd keep this Feast from Year to Year, at the times appointed for this Solemnity; it seems but an Accomplishment of that Prediction, if at every Year's End we take Occasion to do something like observing the Feast of Booths or In-gathering. Indeed the whole Life of Christians shou'd be a perpetual keeping the Feast of Tabernacles, in a spiritual and evangelical Sense. Every day we shou'd be worshipping as in that Feast; Going to CHRIST, the true & living Temple, with our spiritual Sacrifices, of Repentance, Prayer, Thanksgiving, Charity, and Obedience; Going up to CHRIST by lively acts of Faith; Going forth to JESUS without the Camp by imitation of Him in Patience, Self-denial and Mortification; Dwelling in Tabernacles, as in the days of the solemn Feast ||, exercising a holy Contempt of things on the Earth, knowing that here

* Deut. 31. 10. Neh. 8. 18. † Heb. 13. 13. || Hos. 12.

we have *no abiding City*; and in Faith and Hope ascending to Mount *Zion*, the City of the Living GOD, the heavenly *Jerusalem*; setting our *Affections* upon things *above*, and having our Conversation in *Heaven*: *Meditating* in the Law of GOD day and night; *Rejoycing* in the LORD evermore, rejoycing in CHRIST JESUS, triumphing in his praise; hoping in his Mercy; rejoycing in Hope of an House not made with hands, a Tabernacle that can never be taken down, Eternal in the Heavens. Thus the Gospel teaches Christians to live continually; and such a Life would be a perpetual keeping the Feast of Tabernacles. Every day of such a Life would be a day of this solemn Feast. — However, this hinders not but that we may (in conformity to the Jewish Pattern, and the Prophecy aforesaid) keep this Feast at every Year's End with greater Solemnity & in an extraordinary manner. Those *Graves & Duties*, holy Frames and Exercises, that have been mentioned, are now peculiarly *seasonable*. Let us then look back, and look over the several Laws of this Typical Feast; and in the Gospel-sense, put each of them in practice. "Let this Feast * *at the End of the Year*, be kept to the Honour of that GOD, who is the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the first and the last", the first Cause, and the last End of all Things. "As we must *begin* every Year and Year with GOD, so with him likewise we must *end* both. *For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.*" Some are of opinion, that the *Evocation* of *Cain* and *Abel*, (mention'd, *Gen. 4. 3.*) is their *Yearly Sacrifice*, their more solemn Wor-

ship at the *End of the Year*; when they kept their Feast of *In-gathering*, honour'd the LORD with their substance, and made offerings to him of the Increase of the Year, according to their respective Occupations and Possessions. A learned Expositor † faith of the Place; "At the Year's *End*, men were wont in most solemn manner to sacrifice unto GOD, with Thanks for his Blessings, having gathered in their fruits; so the Law of *Moses* did command: which order (as by this appeareth) the *Fathers* observe from the *Beginning*". This Feast then is of *ancient* Date. And it is a *famous* Solemnity. 'Twas one of the three *great* Feasts appointed in the Law of *Moses*. And it is the *more* famous for its being the Time of our LORD's * *Birth*, and *Baptism*; and the season, when that glorious *Invitation* in our Text was given — *In the last day, that great day of the Feast*, Jesus stood and cryed, — The *Last*, is the *eighth* day; which, tho' some wou'd make it a *distinct* Festival, and it be not strictly one of the days of the Feast of *Tents*, yet in a *larger* sense belongs to it, & has *ever* been call'd the last day of it. They kept up their *Tents* and dwelt in them on during the first seven days: but on the eighth day they were at liberty and met together publickly in the *Temple* to keep there an holy Assembly (suppose) in remembrance of their quiet & happy settlement in the Land of *Canaan*, after their long dwelling in *Tents* and their tedious Travels in the *Wilderness*: and so this eighth day was rather an *Appendix* to the Feast of *Tabernacles*, than any Part

† *Ainsworth*. * *Lightfoot's* *Horæ Hebraicæ* in *Evangelio* *Matth.* Pag. 19, & 22.

properly of the Feast it self †. The *first* and the *last* days of this Festival were to be kept as *Sabbaths*; in which they were to rest from all servile Labour, and to worship GOD publickly. The Rule we have in *Lev. 23. 35, 36.* On the *first* day shall be an holy Convocation: ye shall do no servile Work, therein. Seven days shall ye offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord. On the *eighth* day shall be an holy Convocation, unto you, — It is a solemn Assembly, and ye shall do no servile Work therein. That passage, *It is a solemn assembly*, might be translated ||, it is a day of *Inhibition*, Forbiding, Forbearing, or keeping up; All servile Work being prohibited on that day, and the People being oblig'd to remain together for the performance of public Worship; till which was over, they were not permitted to return Home *. Or it might be render'd, a day of *Conclusion* or shutting up; because it was (as 'tis call'd in our Text) the *last* day, the closing day of the feast. — This eighth and last day is call'd *the great* day of the Feast. Perhaps because it was the day of the greatest Joy. On this day was to be seen most of the Joy of Harvest. Some judge that *this* was more especially the Day of *Thanksgiving* to GOD for the Harvest of the Year past, and had a particular view to this Ground of the Festival †. Agreeably on this day there us'd to be the loudest exclamations, the greatest Pomp and Show of Joy. Moreover, on this day the People were *dismiss'd* from their *Booths*, & had leave to remove into their own Houses again; which *Release*, was an aggra-

† Pool, and Jackson, on *Lev. 23. 36.* || *Dutch Annota.*
in loc. * Pool in loc. † Henry on *Lev. 23. 39.*

vation of their Joy, and brighten'd the Triumphs of the Day. It was in *it self* a Refreshment; but especially it might well be so to them for this reason; because it was a *Memorial & Emblem* of that happy time wherein their forty Years tedious march in the Wilderness terminated with an Introduction into and Settlement in the Land of Promise, where they had goodly Dwellings & fruitful Fields: A Mercy, which ought to be kept in everlasting Remembrance, and the Consideration whereof might well fill every Israelite with abundant Joy. — Therefore on this *last* day of the Feast; there were the *highest* Expressions of Gladness & Triumph; whence it is styled the *great* day. The several days of this whole Feast of Tabernacles were termed *Hosanna* because they us'd *once on each* day to compass the Altar, holding Boughs in their hands and waving them to'n'again, often crying out, *Hosanna*, i. e. Save now, I pray. But on the *last* day, they compass'd the Altar *seven* times, with the like Ceremonies and Acclamations; whence it came to pass, that this last day was call'd *Hosanna Rabba*, i. e. the *great* Hosanna, or as in our Text the great day of the Feast. — Upon this day also (as One* observes) they did read the last Section of the Law and likewise began the first; lest they might otherwise seem more joyfull in *ending* their Sections, than willing to begin them. — Upon this day there was an *universal Concourse* and public Appearance of the People at the *Temple*; all being oblig'd to give their attendance on GOD's Worship there. The

† Post on Lev. 23. 36. || Tremellius in Text. * Buxtorf cited by Godwyn.

day of solemn Assembly in any Feast, us'd to be term'd an *high* or *great* day †. Hence the last day in this Feast was so call'd, & it is call'd with an emphasis *that great day*, because it was eminently a day of calling assemblies. On this day they were said emphatically to make a *solemn Assembly* *. Perhaps there was ordinarily at this time a more *full* Congregation than upon the first day; and therefore it might be call'd the great day: or it might be so call'd in comparison of the six days immediately preceeding, on which there was no such *holy Convocation* appointed. — But further ||, On this day the People (say the *Jews*, by the Institution of the prophets *Haggai* & *Zechariah*) were wont (and was a custom peculiar to this Feast) with the greatest pomp and gladness to fetch water [in a golden vessel *] from the Fountain of *Siloam*, and to bring it into the Temple [with the sound of the Trumpet †] where the Priests receiving the same of them, pour'd it out upon the Altar together with the Wine of the Drink-offering. And all this while the People sing that Passage of the Prophet, (*Isai. 12.3.*) *With joy shall ye draw water out of the Well of salvation.* This pouring out of water did (in their apprehensions) denote the Effusion of the holy Spirit, and they expected at this time to have the Spirit of GOD fall upon them, as (according to Tradition) He did on the prophet *Jonah*, when he was attending this Ceremony with Transports of Joy ||. — Thus we see,

*Hammond's Note on Job. 19.31. * Numb. 29.35. || Tremel. in Text. * Lightfoot, Horæ Heb. in Evang. Joh. pag. 124. † Hammond on Text. || Lightf. Harmer of N. T. pag 45.*

why

why the last day was call'd the *great day* of the Feast.

Now this was the solemn *Occasion*, upon which the *Invitation* in our Text was given. There is an *Emphasis* in the words, which speaks something remarkable in the season: *In the last day, that great day of the Feast, Jesus stood, &c.* There are various *Grounds* of this season's being chosen; which may be conjectur'd at. As, —

1. OUR Saviour might make this *Invitation* to the People on the last day of the Feast, to hint unto them the *Insufficiency* of all their *Sacrifices* on the foregoing days, and the *Inability* of the Law to make the *Comers* thereunto perfect. At this Feast of Tabernacles (as was before observ'd) they offer'd a *Multitude* of *Sacrifices*. Every day had a certain *Proportion* assign'd ||. On the first day of the Feast they were to offer thirteen young *Bullocks*; two *Rams*, and fourteen *Lambs* without blemish; on the second day twelve *Bullocks*: and so on, every day the number of *Bullocks*, (the most costly part of the *Sacrifice*) gradually *lessning*; till at length it came to be but *one Bullock*, *one Ram*, and seven *Lambs*; so that on the *last and great Day* of the Festival, the *Sacrifices* were *fewer* than on any other Day. Now the *Account* which some *Jewish* Expositors give of this *Diminution*, is to this purpose, that the number of *Bullocks* to be sacrific'd in the first seven days of the Feast amounted to seventy according to the number of the *Heathen Nations* then in the known World: *for whom* (as they tell

|| Num. 29 13 &c. † Lightfoot Horæ hebr. in Joh. pag. 122, 123.

these Oblations were made : and the *Abating* of the Sacrifices (say they) signify'd, that there would be a Diminution of those Nations, until all things were brought under the Government of the *Messiah*, who was the Expectation and Hope of the *Gentiles* †. Whereas the *single* Sacrifice on the *high day* (the great *Holi-day* as they call'd it) purely respected the *Israelitish* Nation, and betoken'd their special *Endear'dness* to GOD, as a holy & peculiar People.---The Account, which our *Christian* Expositors give of that Abatement of the Offerings, is this. "It was to teach the *Jews* (says One *) not to *trust* to the multitude of their Sacrifices, nor to expect Remission of Sins from them, but from the one and only Sacrifice of *CHRIST*. It might signify (says another ||) a diminishing or wearing away of the legal Sacrifices and Ceremonies. It signify'd unto them (saith another ‡) that the *LORD* was to abolish those Sacrifices, and bring in a perfect sacrifice in place of them, *Jesus Christ once offered for all*. It was hereby intimated to them (saith another *) that the legal Dispensation shou'd *wax* old and *vanish at last* ; and the multitude of their sacrifices shou'd end in *ONE* great Sacrifice, infinitely more worthy than them all".---And perhaps this might be one thing our Saviour had in view, when he made the Invitation in our Text on the last day. He would have them to know, that the *Multitude* of Sacrifices, they had been offering, would *not suffice* ; that they needed *another and better* Sacrifice ; that *He himself* was the only Sacrifice, ac-

† Godwyn. * Pool in Num. 29. 36. || Jackson. ‡ Wilson's Christian Dictionary. Henry.

ceptable and pleasing to GOD. Therefore on the last day, after a vast number of Offerings had been made, *He stood forth*, and called upon all, that (being sensible of the *Insufficiency* of the legal Sacrifices, and considering them as *Types* and *Shadows* of Things to come) still thirsted after something *further* (as necessary) to take away Sin and justify them in the sight of GOD: These (I say) He call'd upon, and invited them to come unto *Him*; whose *Flesh* is *meat* indeed, the great Sacrifice to be fed upon by Faith; and whose *Blood* is *drink* indeed, the Fountain, at which only the thirsty Soul (labouring under a sense of Guilt and Wrath) can have it's longing Thirst quenched.

2. OUR Saviour might deliver this Invitation on the last and great day of the Feast, because it (as hath been observ'd) was a great (if not the greatest) Concourse of the People. Much People were on this day gather'd together at the Temple it being a Sabbath day, and the great day, when they were no longer oblig'd to dwell in their Tents when they had taken their Fill of Mirth & Feasting, and were now most at leisure to attend the public Worship.---Our Saviour then wou'd not miss or forego so special an Opportunity of doing Good but took occasion now to preach the Gospel unto the People; that many hearing, many might come to Him and be saved! Seeing the *Multitude*, he was moved with *Compassion* toward them; and seeing how the *Priests* (their Teachers) neglected their duty, *He* (who is the great Prophet) sat himself with the greater diligence to teach the People, and deliver the Calls of GOD unto them.

3. *THE People were now about to return Home and there cou'd not be a more proper parting Word* the Assembly was that day to break up, the Congregation to disperse, and all return to their own dwellings. Our Saviour therefore gave 'em this Word (the best that cou'd be) to carry home with 'em. It was affecting to him, to think, that all that Assembly were soon to divide & scatter; that he himself was never more to see their Faces on this occasion (having now begun his dying Year) nor indeed ever like to have an Opportunity again of speaking to so great a Body of People together, at least under such Advantages. And He might consider also, that many of those, who were now given'd on this occasion, were never like to enjoy such another opportunity; it being probable that death wou'd prevent them.

HENCE our Savior *takes his leave* of the People, in the most proper manner, with this solemn Invitation in our Text. Some it's likely there were, who had not heard his Instructions and Exhortations in the Temple ever before; and were never like to hear him, if not at this Time. Some that heard him before, *did not heed his Words*: He now therefore *renews* the Gospel-Call unto them. Others perhaps had taken *some notice* of his Preaching, and were almost *perswaded* to receive the Gospel: Now he *confirm* the Impressions made on such & to finish the good Work begun in their Souls, He *again* teaches to them; inviting those who had the Remnants of a holy Thirst after GOD, to come unto HIM, and drink.

BUT finally, *This might be occasion'd by certain*
 O Customs

Customs & Ceremonies of the Day. Thus, on this day the Jews delighted much in *feasting*, allow themselves to eat & drink plentifully, and to make great Mirth; which our Saviour observing, He might thence take occasion to instruct them concerning the true *spiritual* Drink, and invite them thereunto ||. Again, Our Savior in his Speech might have reference to the *Law*; & design to *call them off* from their carnal *Boasting* and Rejoycing in that. Upon

*Festum letitia
Legis.*

this day they kept the Feast of the *Law*; because then they ended the *Reading* of the *Law*. Upon this day CHRIST, who is the *End* of the *Law*, stood up †; & call'd them off from their vain *Boasting* in the *Law* *, to *believe* in HIM as the *Messias* & *Saviour*, who came to *fulfill* & abolish the *Law* of *Moses*. Again, These words of our Saviour might be spoken in *Opposition* to the fore-mention'd Jewish Rite and solemnity of fetching Water; a Ceremony peculiar to this Feast, and perform'd on the last day of it. The forecited passage in the Prophet *Isaiah*, *Ye shall draw water with joy*, &c. is the chief Authority they pretend for that Custom *. The Joy, they call'd the *Joy of the Law*; for by Water (in *Isai. 55. 1.* and else-where) they understood the *Law*. And for this reason they drew and brought the Waters from the River *Siloam* to the Temple with so much *pomp* and *joy*. Moreover they added that the *Pouring out* of the water there signified the *Effusion* of the *holy Spirit*; and therefore the *Pouring out* of the Water was accompany'd with

|| Dutch Annota. in Text. † Wilson's Dict. * Lightf. Heb. in Job. pag. 126. * Lightf.

much Gladness & Singing, because they expected the holy Spirit would be so pleas'd with their Mirth and Musick, as to be charm'd down, and fall upon them in the midst of the Solemnity, with his Divine Inspirations †. — Now to this Rite and Ceremony, accompany'd with so much Folly and Superstition, Our Savior's Speech in the Text & Context may be in *Antithesis*. As if he had said ; || " What, Have you so great joy only for a little water fetcht out of the Fountain of *Siloam* ? Verily, if any man believe in ME, even Rivers of living Water shall out of his open Belly flow unto him ; i. e. in his own Soul he shall have Plenty of the Waters of Life : He shall be filled with all the Fulness of GOD ‡, who is the Mountain of Life. He shall be so filled with the Spirit of GOD, as a Spring of Water, that it shall out of his heart break forth continually in his Actions *. — Do you imagine the Waters (spoken of by the Prophet) metaphorically taken, do denote the Law ? Nay, but they denote the Gifts and Influences of the holy Spirit, which the *Messiah* shall apply Believers withall. — And do you expect the receiving of the holy Spirit from the Law, or for your eternal Joy in the Law ? Behold, The Spirit is received thro' Faith, and comes not by the Law " †. — Any man therefore desire any spiritual Good, let him come unto ME, believing on Me as the only and al sufficient Saviour, and he shall receive of the fulness that is in me, to the supply of all his wants. — At finally some say *, This Water-offering or Litation of Water, (as they call it) was to denote

† Tremell. in Text. || Lightf. ‡ Eph. 3. 19. * Hammond in loc. Gal. 3. 2. • Lightf. Hor. in Joh. p. 129. & Hamm on Text.

the Blessing of *Rain*, which they then pray'd for, as of special use against the approaching Seed-Time. For they judg'd, that at this Feast (when they were celebrating the goodness of GOD in the Harvest of the last Year) Divine Providence decreed & determin'd what Rains there shou'd be in the following Year. [Perhaps this Notion might take countenance from *Zech. 14:17*. Where GOD threatens such as neglect the Feast of Tabernacles, that upon them *there shall be no Rain*.] However, it was their Custom at this Feast to pour out Water before the LORD upon the Altar together with Wine; the design of this Drink-offering was, that the Rains of the Year might bless them. At this Feast they offer'd Water to GOD to engage his smiles on the Seed-Time. Even as at the *Passover* they offered a Sheep or *Homer*; to obtain from GOD his blessing on the Harvest; and at *Pentecost* they offer'd a new Meat offering, call'd the *First Fruits*, to obtain from GOD his blessing on the *Vintage* ||. And this Ceremony of fetching and offering Water was accompany'd with the sound of the Trumpet, and with Singing of Voices and Instruments; with great Vociferation and noisy Acclamations. Now in relation to this, some think, CHRIST here is said to have *cry'd*, or (as the word properly signify's *) Proclaimed with a loud Voice, lifted up his Voice like a Trumpet; making this apposite Proclamation, *If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink*; taking occasion from their fetching Water out of *Siloam*, and offering it to bespeak the blessing of *Rain*; I say, from hence, our Saviour who us'd to spiritualize Earth

|| *Lev. 23: 10, 16.* * *Hammond.*

ly Objects, and from all kinds of Occurrences discourse of heavenly Things, took occasion to exhort the People (as 'twere in the words of the Prophet †) *To seek the Lord, till he rain Righteousness upon them*: and he invites them to repair unto Him, the true and living Fountain, (as 'twere in the words of another Prophet *) *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come to the waters, and he that hath no money; come, buy & eat; yea, come, buy wine & milk without money & without price. Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not Bread? And your labor for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight it self in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear & your soul shall live.*—— With many such like words (we may suppose) He exhorted the People. It seems to be only the general Subject of his Discourse, that is hinted in our text. No doubt there were considerable *Enlargements*, which it hath not pleased the holy Ghost to set on Record. However we must be thankful, that we have any part of what he said, written. For it is truly a golden Passage, a good Word, and worthy of all Acceptation.—— The *Contents* of it have been in some little measure open'd unto you: and the *Occasion*, whereon this blessed Speech was deliver'd has been shewn: Upon which I have made some large Remarks, suiting the season; it being now the last day of the Year, according to vulgar apprehension & account.—— It becomes your spiritual Instructors to study to *discern both Time and Judgment* ||; and to find out acceptable words †.

Hos. 10. 12. * *Isai. 55. 1, &c.* || *Ecc. 8. 5.* † *Ecc. 12. 10.*

Now

Now such, *seasonable* Words are, wont to be. A word spoken in due season, how good is it * ? How grateful and useful ? -- Wherefore, this Year coming in with a Sabbath, I took occasion (hoping I shou'd speak a word in season) to counsel and exhort you to *begin* the Year with GOD. And it falling out, that it likewise *ends* with a Sabbath, I have also (thro' Divine goodness) an opportunity now to tell you, How to *close* the Year with GOD. —

The *Conclusion* of the Year is a remarkable Period ; and a very agreeable Time for more enlarged Devotions, for Self-examination ; and for serious Reflections ; which indeed do then very naturally flow in upon the minds of pious and thinking Christians who accustom themselves to take a solemn and distinguishing Notice of such particular Seasons. There are many religious Meditations and Exercises, that at this time are peculiarly seasonable, which I might remember you of and exhort you unto : but as to these things, I have prevented my self in a great measure in my former Discourse, on the first day of the Year ; wherein I spake somewhat largely of the Duties *reflex*, as well as prospective. —

This notwithstanding, I have thought fit to say what has been already offer'd in the present Discourse ; and shall now add two things further, relating more especially to our Savior's Speech in the Text ; which it seems necessary to resume the Consideration of.

I wou'd, in the first place, call upon you all to *examine your selves*, and inquire, what regard you have had (more particularly in the course of the

Year past) to the Duties requir'd, and what Fulfilment you have experienced of the Promise made, in our Text. And then I shall conclude with a word of *Exhortation*; calling upon Sinners to hearken to and comply with the gracious Invitation of our Savior.

I. EXAMINE *your selves every one, What Regard you have had to the Duties Mention'd in the Text; and what Fulfilment of the blessed Promise of our Saviour therein offer'd.*

HERE are two distinct Particulars. Wherefore---

[1.] **INQUIRE** *what Respect you've had to the Duties mention'd.* Consider what has been your general Temper and Carriage in reference to those first and great Duties, of Thirsting after, and Coming to CHRIST for, spiritual Good.

LET me ask you here particularly, --

1. **WHETHER** *you've been truly & rightly thirsting? Whether a real spiritual Thirst has been in your Soul?*

(1.) **HAVE** *you been thirsting after right Things?* Have your Desires been placed on proper Objects? Have you been thirsting after the Favor, Image, and Presence of GOD, an Interest in CHRIST, his Righteousness, his Graces, and Comforts, &c? Or, Have you been craving after things of a *contrary* Nature? Have you not been thirsting after the *Pleasures of Sin*, and been drinking in Iniquity like Water? -- Have you not been thirsting after *World-Enjoyments*, and the Delights of Sense; panting after the Dust of the Earth; and (as was affirm'd of the King of *Babylon*) enlarging your Desires, as well, which can't be satisfy'd? Have you not been

too greedy of Gain; had a Heart exercised with covetous Practices: and gone astray, following the error of Balaam, who loved the Wages of Unrighteousness? Or, have you not been thirsting after the *Honours* of this World; been vainly ambitious of Preferments and Applause among Men? --- Inquire whether your Heart has not thus been set up on Temporal & Earthly Blessings. What has been your Language? That ||, *Who will shew us any Good? What shall we eat? What shall we drink? And wherewith shall we be clothed?* --- Or that †, *Where with shall I come before the Lord, and bow my self before the High God? What must I do to be saved?* --- Inquire whether you have been thirsting after *spiritual Blessings*; the things that are above and from above; the good and perfect Gifts, that come down from the Father of Lights; the River of his Pleasures, who is the Fountain of living Waters. --- Thus, Have your Desires been carry'd out after *Righteousness*, to justify you; being sensible of your need of a Righteousness, and the insufficiency of your own? Have you been thirsting after *Grace* to sanctify you? *Divine Strength*, to uphold you? *Goings in the way of Truth*? *Divine Consolation* to pacify your wounded Spirits, and refresh your Souls in the midst of your distressing Thoughts? Have you thus been thirsting after the Waters of Life, spiritual Blessings? --- Make solemn Inquiry into the Frame of your Souls with respect hereunto.

(2.) *HAVE you been thirsting in a right Manner and Measure?* Has your Thirst had the several Properties of a spiritual Thirst? -- Have your Desires been

humble ? accompany'd with a lowly sense of your
Unworthiness of the least Favour from the
ORD ; and a renouncing of all Creature-Depen-
ences for supplies.

AGAIN, *Have your Desires been Eager, ardent
and vehement* ? Like David's †, when he longed,
and said, Oh that one would give me Drink of the
water of the Well of Bethlehem ! Have you felt
mighty Pain within, for want of the good desired ?
Have you felt in your breast a mighty ardour of
love unto CHRIST & his Benefits, because of their
superlative excellency and worth ? Has your Soul
been broken for the longing it hath had to
see him ? — Or have you (on the other hand) con-
tented your self with faint Desires, feeble and cold
affections ?

AGAIN, *Have your Desires after Spiritual Bless-
ings been Transcendent and Superlative ; and pre-
sumptory, without any Reserve* ? Have these Spirit-
ual Desires been the predominant, the ruling De-
sires of your Soul ? Have other Desires been duly
subordinated to these ? No Desires entertain'd and
cherish'd, that stand in Opposition to, or come in
competition with, or but what might be serviceable
to this great Desire of the Soul ? Have you been
willing to part with all other things, that you might
obtain these spiritual & heavenly things ? Have you
and in your Heart a chearful Readiness to sacri-
fice all earthly Enjoyments, that you might have
righteousness, and Grace, and Peace from GOD, and
Title to the Inheritance in Light ? Has nothing
been able to quiet your longing Appetite ? Has your

Desire been so strong as to allay all worldly Contentments, and quench worldly Desires; and dispose you to welcome the greatest losses and severest Trials; so that you might enjoy CHRIST, and Covenant-Blessings in him? Have you thus sought the LORD with your whole Desire *? Has your Expectation been only from the LORD, and have your Desires been thus *resolute*, absolute, and not standing upon Terms; nor having any Reserves? Has that been the unfeigned sense and language of your Soul, *I count all things but loss, that I might win Christ* †.

• AGAIN, Have you been uneasy and (in a sort impatient, till you could get your Desire accomplish'd Hope defer'd maketh the Heart sick ||. Hath it been thus with you? Have you not been able to rest contented without those good Things you desire? And have you been longing with a holy Impatience? Has that been the Disposition & Language of your Soul, (Psal. 143. 6, 7.) *I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land. Hear me speedily, O LORD, my spirit faileth: bid not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit. And that, (Psal. 61.) O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.*

AGAIN, Have your Aspirations been Constant Abiding? Can you say, (as in Psal. 119. 20.) *My Soul breaketh for the Longing, that it hath to thy Judgments at all Times?* Have your Desires been unwearied and unceasing? Have you not been

* 2 Chron. 15, 15. † Phil. 3. 8. || Prov. 13. 12.

tired with Waiting & Expecting? Or, Have your Desires been only in some particular Moods; by Fits & Starts, and in some Pangs of Conscience?

AGAIN, *Have your Desires been Unlimited and Insatiable?* Would no small Measures of Grace, no inferior Degrees of spiritual Blessings satisfy you? Have you been unwilling to sit down with, and stop at imperfect Beginnings of Sanctification & Consolation? Have your Desires been enlarged & unsatisfiable; never quieted, but always craving after still higher degrees of spiritual Good, and Enjoyment? Or have they been stinted to certain Measures; and limited, only so far as may consist with such & such Ends & Designs?

FURTHERMORE, (and I shall add only this one word, which perhaps might more properly have been placed before) *Have your Desires been Active and Industrious?* Has your Thirst put you upon diligent Endeavours to obtain the desired Blessings? Or, have you contented your self with idle Wishes, such as the Desires of the Generality are) mere, lazy, fruitless Wouldings? Many Sinners seem wonderfully affected now and then under some awakening Word, or rousing Providence; and perhaps express their Desires in very pathetic Terms: but they don't proceed to suitable Efforts & Endeavours; they take no Pains, to obtain that which they pretend so vehemently to long after. They rest in Desires, *the Soul of the sluggard desireth; but his Hands refuse to labour* *. — I appeal to you then, and call upon you to enquire, Whether this has been your happy Case, or no? Have you contented your

self with empty, formal, unactive Wishes? Or, Has there been an agreeable Working, a vigorous Laboring & striving after the good Things you desire?—The Psalmist said, *O My God, my soul thirsteth for thee*: and cou'd moreover say, *My soul followeth hard after thee* ||. If there be true & fervent Desires, then the awakned Soul will follow hard after the LORD in the Way of his Appointment. — Let it be inquir'd then: Have you been solicitous & studious to get rightly acquainted with the Gospel-method of Salvation by JESUS CHRIST? And have you given Diligence to comply with the Terms? Not objecting against them, nor discourag'd by any Difficulties in the way, &c.

Thus let every one examine himself concerning the first thing, this spiritual Thirst. If your Desire be found thus qualify'd; if they have been plac'd on proper Objects, and been exerted in due Way and Measures, (such as I have mention'd) then you have truly thirsted in the sense of the Text; and are such as CHRIST invites to come unto him, which is the subject of the next Inquiry. Wherefore

2. INQUIRE, *Whether you have been rightly going to CHRIST, for the satisfaction of your thirst*. Unto him shou'd the Gathering of the People be; who is the Fountain of Salvation, the true Fountain of *Shiloam*; out of whom do flow Rivers of living & healing Waters. Well then, inquire; Whether you have been going to CHRIST in a right manner to have your Thirst quenched.

HAVE you been going to CHRIST, in the way of Faith? Realizing his Sutableness & Sufficiency

to satisfy all the longing Desires of your thirsty Soul; having your whole Dependence on him, and a lively Hope in him for Mercy to help you. Coming to CHRIST, and believing on him, are equivalent Terms †.

AGAIN, *Have you been going to CHRIST, in the way of Prayer?* Have you gone daily to the Throne of Grace, and made known your Request by Prayer and Supplication; laying open all your Wants, and Grievs & Fears, and spreading all your Desires before the LORD? Have you gone to the Fountain; cast your self at the Foot of Sovereign Grace, and upon your Knees labor'd fervently in Prayer, continuing therein without Ceasing, as the importunate Widow did, who is set forth as an Example *? Can you appeal to Heaven, and say with the Psalmist ||, *Lord, all my Desire is before thee, & my Groaning is not hid from thee.* — *My heart was not within me, while I was musing the fire burned; when spake I with my Tongue.* — And now Lord, what wait I for? *My Hope is in thee* — *I poured out my complaint before the Lord: When my spirit was overwhelmed within me; I looked on my right hand, and beheld; but Refuge failed me. I cryed unto thee, O Lord, Thou art my Portion in the Land of the Living.*

FINALLY, *Have you been waiting on CHRIST, in the way of his Ordinances, and the use of Means?* Have you been searching the Scriptures, attending to the Word preacht, & going from one Ordinance to another, stretching forth your hands to GOD, and seeking the LORD diligently? — We read (Psalm 107.9.) *He satisfyeth the longing Soul.* “The longing

† Job. 1. 12. * Luk 18 || Psalm 39 9 — 39 3.7 — 142.2. Eccl. Sonl

Soul (as one observes) is in the Original the *running* Soul, the Soul that runs up and down (in quest of some desired good) from one Means to another leaving none unattempted". Thus we shou'd express our longing after CHRIST, and his Benefits. We must make due Improvement of all proper Means, & follow him in every Way of his Appointment. We must go to the Wells of Salvation, to the Brooks of Water; and lay our Mouths to every Conduit-Pipe. If one Means will not do, then we shou'd try another; if the more ordinary fail, then apply extraordinary: and never satisfy our selves in any Duty or Ordinance, unless we meet with CHRIST (the desire of our Souls) therein, and of the Fulness that is in him, receive some precious Gifts.—Now let it be inquir'd: Has it been thus with you, in the general Course of your Life past, and particularly this last Year? Have you been going to CHRIST, weary and thirsty, in the way of his holy Institutions; diligently improving the Means of Grace, and religiously attending all Gospel-Ordinances, with the whole Bent of your inflamed Powers?

• LET every one solemnly put these several Inquiries to himself; and thus examine into his Temper and Carriage (this Year more especially) with reference to the Duties mention'd in the Text.—And if you find your self faulty, mourn your Guilt with deep Remorse. But if you have been truly thirsting after Spiritual Blessings, & rightly coming to CHRIST for them, Adore and magnify him for his Grace in you and with you; to which belongs the Praise of all your good Desires and good Deeds.

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Phil. 2.

or it is the Spirit of CHRIST, who hath been work-
ing in you both to will & to do, of his good pleasure †.

Now in the next place, ———

[2.] LET it be inquired, *What your Receipts
and Experiences this Year have been ; or what Ful-*

fillment you have had of the blessed Promise in the
text. Our Savior promises here, That they who
being athirst come unto him, shall *drink*, i.e. receive
the Spiritual Goods, Influences, and Refreshments
they need and crave. ——— Inquire then what Expe-

rience you had of the Accomplishment of this pre-
cious Promise. Have you receiv'd the Blessing from
the LORD, and Righteousness from the GOD of

our Salvation ? Have you receiv'd the Remission
of your Sins, the Gift of the HOLY GHOST, & the Ear-
nest of eternal Life ? Have you met with CHRIST,

and had Communion with Him in Ordinances &
Providences ? Have you had your Wants filled,
your Graces & Comforts increased ?

WHAT Nourishment have you receiv'd ? What
growth in Grace, in Holiness, & Virtue ? Tho' your
beginning (it may be) was small ; yet has your

water End greatly increased * ? Have you made
gradual Improvements in Piety and Wisdom, been
built up in CHRIST, & advanc'd in spiritual Sta-

te ? Or, Have you come to a Stand, a Pause, & per-
haps declined ? Have you been as a watered Garden,
bringing forth much Fruit ? Or, as a parched Wil-

lerness and an empty Vine ? Has CHRIST been
to you a Fountain open'd, or a Fountain shut up,
to the Dispensations of sanctifying Grace ?

AND then as to the Dispensations of Comfort,

*Phil. 2. 13. * Job 8. 7.*

How

How has it been with you ? Have you been refreshed with the Comforts of the HOLY GHOST, been made to drink of the River of Life, & had your Consolation abounding by CHRIST ? Or, have you been deny'd those streams which make glad the City of GOD ; and gone to every Pit for water, but come away ashamed, with your vessel empty, Your Soul dry & thirsty ?—— If this latter hath been your Case, be deeply humbled in the Remembrance hereof, mourning the Absence of the Comforter ; and solicitous to find out the Cause, why good Things are withheld from you. But if the former be your Case ; if you have open'd your Mouth wide, & had large Draughts of living Waters, acknowledge the rich Mercy of our Lord JESUS CHRIST unto you. Adore Him as the blessed Fountain ; Admire his free & distinguishing Grace towards you ; Maintain a humble sense of your Unworthiness : Realise your unspeakable Happiness : Envy not the Men of the World the filthy Pleasures of Sin, & dreggy Delights of Sense. Retain the memory of your former happy Experiences, and let these whet your Appetite and raise your Expectations for the future ; make you long for immediate access to the Fountain it self, and make you more frequent in your approaches to the Throne of Grace, more diligent in your attendance upon the holy Ordinances of CHRIST.

LET me here apply all the foregoing Inquiries and Counsels, particularly to such as have this Year met with *Sickness, Bereavements*, and the like. There has been a very sickly & dying Time of late among us, and few there are but what have been visited

with sore Sickness, either Themselves or Families, and many of us have met with *The Small-Pox.* ereaving Dispensations. Now let us enquire, What have been our Frames, Carriages, and Experiences in the Months of Affliction that have passed over us. What was our Petition & Concern in the days of our Distress? Did we thirst after spiritual Blessings, or bodily Comforts, most? Was Life & Health & Ease, that we desired chiefly? Pardon, Grace & Glory? Did we hunger & thirst after Righteousness, and our Souls pant after GOD, the living GOD? When his Waves and his Billows rolled over us, was our Prayer to the GOD of our life? When we were in the Furnace, did we in-reat his Favour with our whole hearts? Was our desire towards Him and the Remembrance of his name? Did we hope in his Word, and our Eyes fail his Salvation? — Did we experience the Manifestations of his Love, and enjoy his gracious Presence? Did He command his loving-kindness in the day-time, and was his Song with us in the Night-son? — Have we come forth, as Gold out of the Fire, purify'd and refin'd? Can we truly say, the Psalmist did, *It is good for me that I have been afflicted: Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now have I kept thy Word. Behold I have longed for thy Precepts: Teach me thy Statutes. I have sorrow, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy precious Judgments.* Are these the present sentiments, the Desires, & Resolutions of our Souls? Are our Vows forgotten, our Desires cool'd, our souls reviv'd, and our former vain Conversation returned to? — Let every one very seriously put
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these Questions to himself, and let Conscience give a faithful answer. Such whose Hearts condemn them, let 'em be cover'd with shame, and fear lest some more aggravated Judgments speedily overtake them. But let such who have the Testimony of a good Conscience, rejoyce in the LORD, and walk worthy of the LORD to all pleasing.

THUS much for the first general Head; the Examining our selves with Relation to the Duties and Promise in the Text.

II. *LET it be a word of Exhortation to Sinners that they would now hearken to the Invitation of our Saviour, and comply with the Duties requir'd by him in the Text.* The Invitation of CHRIST is, *If any man thirst let him come unto me.* O let every Sinner see to it, that he get his Soul inflamed with spiritual Thirst, and go to the Lord JESUS CHRIST for spiritual Satisfaction,

(1.) *LET secure Sinners labor to get their Souls inflam'd with a true spiritual Thirst.* O don't be cool towards the spiritual Blessings and heavenly Things, that are in CHRIST JESUS. Labour to see the *Evil*, and get a rooted Abhorrence, of Sin which separates between CHRIST and you, & withholds those good Gifts from you. Labor to see the *Vanity of the World*, and Emptiness of all Creature Comforts. Be convinced of the *Excellency* & *Necessity* of Spiritual Blessings. Realise it, that these are the *best* of Blessings; that they only can afford solid Satisfaction to the Soul of Man, & really supply it's Wants. Remember, You are naturally in perishing State; your Souls are as the dry & parched Desert, or as the chased panting Hart; and without

seasonable Relief you must needs faint & die. You can't be happy, but must be miserable, so long as you abide in your present forlorn Condition, whether you resent it or not: And the less you resent it, your Case is so much the more wretched & hopeless. O labour therefore to see the wofull Indigency and Misery of your natural State; to know your Trouble, and feel your Need: and be concern'd to obtain Help & Supply. Be in an Agony of Soul, and give no Rest to your Thoughts nor Sleep to your Eyes, 'till you have found where and how you may escape the dolefull Misery, which is upon you. If you remane in carnal security, there is no Remedy for you; Die you must unavoidably, and you will perish wonderfully.

(2.) *LET awakened thirsty Sinners go to JESUS CHRIST for spiritual Satisfaction.* Such of you as are under Convictions, that have your Eyes open'd to see your perishing Condition by nature, and whose Souls are inquisitive and craving after the Waters of Life; Be directed and encourag'd to go to JESUS CHRIST for a supply, as the hunted Hart to the Water-brooks, or the thirsty Israelites in the Wilderness to the Rock smitten.

To animate you, consider;

1. *SUPPLY and Satisfaction is to be had in CHRIST, and no where else.* A Thirst after Happiness in general, 'tis what all Mankind do conspire in, tho' they exceedingly vary in their Judgment and Choice of the *Object* of Blessedness. But now infallible Divine Declaration, as well as constant human Experience, abundantly shows, that nothing can satisfy the Cravings of the Soul, but a Good

that is spiritual, immortal and immutable ; agreeing with the Nature of the Soul, and proportionable to it's Necessities in our fallen State. Now all this Good is treasur'd up in CHRIST, and in Him alone. There is nothing of it in the Creature. The World is but a broken Cistern, that can hold no Water, nor yield any true Satisfaction : and if you seek any where among Carnal Objects for Refreshment, they will certainly deceive your Expectations. CHRIST is the Fountain of living Waters. All our springs are in Him. *All Fulness dwells in Him* : a Fulness of Sufficiency for Himself, a Fulness of Redundancy for Believers : a Fulness of Merit & Righteousness, a Fulness of the Spirit of Grace & Comfort ; a Fulness of Glory. In CHRIST there is enough to supply all our Wants, and to satiate our utmost Cravings. In him there is an *exceeding Abundance* of all Good, above what we can ask or think. Enough for You ; enough for Me ; enough for All that thirst : and infinitely *more* than enough. Joh. 4. 14. *Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again : But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst : but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up to everlasting life.* Consider,

2. YOU are invited to come to CHRIST for a needful supply & satisfaction. The Good that fountain'd in CHRIST is communicable ; and thirsty Souls are bidden to come unto CHRIST for it. He is not a Fountain sealed, and inaccessible, but a Fountain opened, and freedom of Access to it is allow'd ; yea, Invitations to repair unto it are given.

ven. Souls, they are to CH. every fore do not ? Soul shall Christ, you in 3. T and A. The Lo- able P a kind according him in Thus, Water a thirst, l of Israe n high Consola- make h n him er upon ground re they ss : fo believe- good thi life & C Job.

ven. CHRIST is exhibited, and offer'd to thirsty Souls, in the Word written & preach'd: and there they are woo'd with much importunity to come unto CHRIST, and accept of him. *Isai. 55. begin. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the Waters. Wherefore do ye spend your Lab or for that which satisfyeth not? Incline your Ear, and come unto Me, and your Soul shall live. 2 Cor. 5. 20. We are Embassadors for Christ, as tho' God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*

3. THE Invitation is back'd with many Promises, and Assurances of Satisfaction in Case you will come. The LORD has oblig'd himself by the most inviolable Promises, to make you welcome, to give you a kind Reception, and to supply all your Need according to his Riches in Glory, if you repair unto him in the Gospel-way of Faith and Repentance. Thus, *Isai. 41. 17, 12. When the Poor & Needy seek Water and there is none, and their Tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open Rivers in high places, &c. Rivers of Grace, Rivers of Consolation, Rivers of living Water; But this I will give he of the Spirit, which they who believe in him shou'd receive.* *Isai. 44. 3. I will pour Water upon him that is thirsty, and Floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit, &c. Mat. 5. 9. Blessed are they which do hunger & thirst after Righteousness: for they shall be filled. Joh. 6. 35, 54. He that believeth on me shall never thirst, (never want any good thing, but shall have all things necessary for life & Godliness) Whoso drinketh my Blood, hath e-*

† Job. 7. 38, 39.

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ternal Life, and I will raise him up at the last day. Mat. 11. 28. *Come unto Me, all ye that labour & are weary, and I will give you Rest.* — Thus you have many great and pretious Promises, to encourage your Faith & Flight to CHRIST. And from hence you may be sure of meeting with a kind Entertainment, if you go unto Him. He hath expressly said *Joh. 6. 37.* Him that cometh to me, I will in no way cast out.

4. *THE Invitation is most gracious, and condescending, as well as the Offer universal.* The Fountain stands open for all believing Comers, to partake at free Cost. No Exception is made against any thirsting penitent Soul, however vile & sinfull. No *Personal Merit* is insisted on; No *Price* demanded nor any *Returns* expected but those of Gratitude & Obedience. You that are utterly unworthy, and have no Qualifications to recommend you, nor any Thing to tender as a valuable Consideration, are notwithstanding invited to come, if you thirst. So runs the Invitation, *Isai. 55. 1.* *Ho, every one that thirsts, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no Money, Come, — without Money, and without Price.* — And so stands the Promise, *Rev. 21. 6.* *I will give him that is athirst, of the Fountain of the water of Life freely.* O the abounding Riches, and astonishing Freeness of Divine Grace! Let every Soul be transported with this Thought; and hereby be persuaded to close with CHRIST upon Gospel-Terms.

5. *YOUR going to CHRIST is indispensably necessary to your Participation in the Benefits of the Promise.* You must go to the Well of Salvation, draw water out of it, in the Gospel-Way; otherwise

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you will never partake of the Waters of Life. If you do not drink of these living Waters, what will it profit you to have had the Discovery & Offer of them made unto you? And you will never have them given you to drink, unless you go to CHRIST for them in the way of Faith & Repentance. Unless CHRIST dwell in your hearts by faith, unless you receive him upon Gospel-terms, you will certainly miss of Satisfaction & Happiness. Hence that Complaint of our Savior, Joh. 5. 40. *Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have Life.* Hence likewise that solemn Expostulation of the Apostle, Heb. 2. 3. *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation?* O let every thirsty Sinner then be persuaded to come to JESUS CHRIST in the way of his Appointment: Accept his Invitation, & venture your soul upon his gracious Offer. *If any man thirst, let him come, and drink.* Don't proudly stand upon Terms; but submit to the humbling Methods of the Gospel, and comply with it's reasonable Demands. Make no trifling Excuses. Say not, I have nothing wherewith to purchase these Benefits: For they are freely tender'd to you. Say not, I am unworthy and am not come; For the more unworthy you are, the more will Divine Grace abound and triumph in the bestowment of Gospel-benefits upon you. And the more humbly sensible you are of your own Unworthiness, the more welcome you shall be to Gospel-grace. O come then at the Master's Bidding; see that you refuse him not*. Come to the Well-head; open your Mouth wide, and it shall be filled ||: You shall be abundantly satisfy'd with the Fatness of

Heb. 12. 25. || Psal. 81. 10.

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 is House and drink of the River of his Pleasures †. But if you *reject* his Invitation, and *refuse* to come, you will e'er long be parched up with a fiery Thirst, and perish with a burning Drought. O *realise* the absolute *Necessity* of your Coming to CHRIST, and get your Heart affected more and more with the sense hereof. Realise the utter *Emptiness* of the World, and Renounce all Creatures, as perishable Streams, as lying Vanities & Refuges of Deceit. Renounce every *Lust*, as an opposition to CHRIST; and disclame all *Confidence* in any supposed Righteousness of your own, as standing in Competition with CHRIST: and say with *Ephraim* *, *What have I any more to do with Idols?* Let all the Disappointments you have hitherto met withall, when wandering from Mountain to Hill in pursuit of Happiness, help to drive you to CHRIST, and hasten your Flight to him for Satisfaction; who only can slake the Thirst of your longing Soul. *Realise* CHRIST's *Ability & Willingness* to do this: and *Plead* his Sufficiency. Go to his Throne of Grace; fall down at his Foot, and beseech his tender Compassions. Come near to his Seat, & fill your Mouth with Arguments. Take to your self Words, and tell him, That your thirsty Soul is ready to faint & famish; and that you know not whither else to go but to him for Relief and Refreshment; that he is able, yea he offer'd to bestow the same upon you; and that there will be a glorious display of his sovereign Grace. Thus plead his own Glory; plead his Promises; plead your own absolute Necessity: and Resign yourself to his Covenant-Mercy; begging that he would

† *Psal.* 36. 8. * *Hos.* 14. 8.

Take Pity upon you, & make your perishing Soul an
 instance of the glorious Triumphs of his Grace and
 saving Power.--- Seek the LORD, & wait on him in
 the use of all proper *Means*, attending on all his holy
 institutions, resolving to be found in the Way of his
 blessing.--- Wait *patiently & perseveringly*; keeping
 up your Appetite, and maintaining an humble Ex-
 pectation; referring it to his infinite Wisdom to
 choose his own Time & Way; but still resolving that
 you will expect all needfull & saving Communica-
 tions from him, that you will follow him with your
 importunate Sollicitations and never give him any
 rest, till he hath satisfy'd you with good Things;
 that (with Jacob) *You will not let him go, except he*
bless you.--- Let not any Delay of Divine Supplies
 discourage your Hopes, damp your Thirst, or check
 your Pursuits after them. But wait resolutely: Re-
 pair frequently to the Fountain of Grace; Come
 me after time, and trust in the LORD at all times;
 pour out your Heart before him, continuing in Pray-
 er without Ceasing; and in due season you shall re-
 ceive, if you faint not.--- Come with *enlarged Desires*;
 for it is a full Fountain, over-flowing & ever-flow-
 ing; it's Waters fail not, but an infinite Plenitude
 remains, tho' an innumerable Multitude have drank
 thereof & been satisfy'd. "Come away then to the
 Fountain, and drink your Fill of it. Come *as you*
are, however vile & unworthy,---for the Fountain is
 free. Come to have *all your wants* supply'd here;
 for the Fountain is *full*. Come *now*, while it stands
 open, and is accessible. Come speedily, instantly;
 defer not so important an Action one Moment

See the late Rev. Mr. Willard's Fountain open'd. pag. 43.

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longer. You have delay'd too long already ; & have thereby grieved the Spirit of GOD, & wrong'd your own Soul. Notwithstanding, there is still Hope that you may speed, if you come to CHRIST & seek him with your whole Heart. *Now is the accepted Time.* But possibly, if you miss the present season, it may be afterwards too late. E'er long the streams of Ordinances may be dry'd up ; and the Fountain shut up, the Passage to it stop'd, and an unpassable Gulph fixed between that & you. *Death* may soon cut you off, period all your Opportunities, and dash your Hopes in one Moment. You may die this Year, this Month, or Week ; yea this Night thy Soul may be requir'd of thee : & then what will become of you, if not found in CHRIST, the Fountain of Salvation ! You may read your Doom in Prov. i. 24. *Because I have called, & ye refused, I also will laugh at your Calamity, I will mock when your Fear cometh. When your Fear cometh as a Desolation, and your Destruction cometh as a Whirlwind. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer ; they shall see me early, but they shall not find me.* O tremble at these Words of Terror be one day pronounced concerning you. Beware then of dangerous & sinful Delays. If any man thirst, let him come to the Waters now, even now while it is called, To day Make Haste ; and what thou doest, do quickly. Rev. 22. 17. *The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come : And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*

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G O D L I

Among a Professing People,

T O B E

Intercessors & Reformers,

In a Day of the LORD's Anger :

Consider'd in a DISCOURSE on *Jer. xviii. 20.*
Now Published at the desire of many, who heard
the Substance of it delivered in a SERMON,
at the Weekly Lecture in *Boston, Feb. 15. 1721, 2.*

*Neh. 2. 10. When Sanballat & Tobiab the servant,
heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly, that there
was come a man to seek the welfare of the
Children of Israel.*

*Habak. 3. 2, 16. O LORD, I have heard thy speech,
and was afraid : O LORD, revive thy work in
the midst of the years ; in wrath remember mercy.
When I heard, I trembled in my self, that I might
rest in the day of trouble.*

*Sai. 30. 8. &c. Now go, write it before them in a
Table, and note it in a Book ; that it may be for
Time to come, &c.*

Perfuit, qui profuit. Fugit hora : Ora, labora.

JER. XVIII. 20.

—Remember, that I stood before thee to speak
good for them, and to turn away thy wrath
from them.

THESE are the words of *Jeremiah*
who (we may observe) was the last
Prophet, sent to the Jewish Nation
before their captivity in *Babylon*. He
was one of the common Priests in
Anathoth. He was advanc'd to the
extraordinary office of a Prophet (in the days of
good *Josiah*) when very Young : and continu'd
long while ; tho' not nigh so long as *Hosea* (the first
writing Prophet, as some think) who is said † to
have prophesied near Ninety Years. And yet *Je-*
reiah's Book is larger considerably than his. We
have reason to think that *Hosea* preach'd as much
as he, and perhaps had as many Revelations : but
there was not so much of his publish'd, or at least not
banded down in the sacred Records. " Many ex-
cellent Prophets wrote nothing, and others but
little ; who yet were very useful in their day
" And so in the Christian Church there have been
" many burning and shining Lights, who are now
" known to Posterity by their Writings ; and yet
" were no way inferior in gifts & graces, and serv-
" ceableness to their own Generation, than those
" that are : and some that have left but little behind

† Mr. Henry's Exp. of Hos. — The Introduction.

“them, and make no great figure among Authors, yet were as valuable men as the more voluminous Writers”. Men’s natural *Genius*, as well as *Opportunities* vary; and to this may the *difference* in part be owing: tho’ there is a special direction of Divine Providence in this affair.

THE *Style* even of the inspir’d Writers is very *various*; the Spirit of GOD serving his own designs by the different genius and capacity of those, by whom he spake, at sundry times and in *divers* manners. As Paul, & Apollos, & Cephas, under the New Testament are noted as very different Speakers: so were Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah under the old.

H O S E A (as Criticks observe) us’d a Style very close & sententious, peculiar to himself; and in some places it seems to be like Solomon’s Proverbs.

I S A I A H used a Style more copious & flowing; but incomparably curious & polite, full of majesty, and full of oratory; sometimes sublime & towering always elegant and lively. But

J E R E M I A H was less of an Orator: his manner of speaking was more familiar, plain, and unpolish’d. However, there appears a great deal of holy flame & fervor in his Preaching. He was a very painfull, faithfull, zealous Prophet. In the nineteen first chapters of his Book of Prophecies, we have some of his *Sermons*; (I suppose, in abstract; perhaps Baruck’s Roll might have many of the Enlargements) and here we find a Variety of the most pathetical Exhortations, with the most moving Admonitions, Reproofs and Warnings. But very little regarded by the Men of that generation, to whom he preach’d. It was a great favour to

to the People, that this excellent Minister so long continu'd, laboring in the word, and zealously affecting them. And yet it seems he had but little success in his Ministry; which is the melancholy Lot of many of the best Preachers in all times of the World. They had him a great while among them, but to very little purpose. They despis'd his youth, and regarded not his age. They gave him very base, harsh, and ungrateful Treatment. He seems to have met with more ill Usage and Persecution, than any of his brethren the Prophets. He calls himself *a man of Contention to the whole Earth*; and complains of his people, saying *Every one doth curse me*, tho' I have done no man any wrong. Neither the Innocence of the Dove, nor the Wisdom of the Serpent, cou'd secure him from unjust Calumny, Malice, and Ill will. As became a faithful Prophet, he set himself to bear Witness against, and to reform, the Corruptions of the Times; but was always oppos'd, and malign'd by his thankless and ungenerous Country-men. They despis'd his preaching, sought to ruin his Reputation, and even to take away his Life. This in many places he pathetically complains of; and particularly in our Context, which I shall read to you, and make some brief Remarks upon. Verse 18 & 19. *They said they, Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah: for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet: come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words. Give heed to me, O LORD, and bearken to the voice of them that contend with me.*

Now if we reflect, we shall find, that the *Occasion* of the Peoples displeasure at the Prophet was his *plain dealing* with them, his faithfull reprovings their sins, and warning them of approaching Judgments. The occasion is hinted in the introductory word, *THE N said they, &c.* Which affords us this Observation; That it is sometimes the Humour of a vain World, to be enrag'd at the Ministers of GOD, for their Fidelity and holy Zeal: because they don't prophesy smooth things, and flatter Sinners in their Carnality and Hypocrisy? but with plainness of speech tell them their whole Duty, sharply rebuke their Sins, and set the awfull Threatnings of GOD before them; This kindles their Anger.— But what an *unreasonable* humour is this, and how very wicked? 'Tis as if the Patient shou'd fly in his Physician's face: and as if one shou'd rudely spurn at a Messenger from his Royal Master.

AGAIN, if we consider *Who* the Persons were, that thus malign'd the Prophet, namely *Professors of Religion*; we may very naturally observe, That *Formalists* in Religion, when their *Lusts* are touch'd and grated upon in the faithfull preaching of the Word, do usually turn the vilest *Haters* of GOD's servants, and shew the most implacable Enmity to them: and this many times under the cloke of sanctimonious Zeal and with a carnal dependence on their Temple-Privileges: For thus they insinuated, *The Law shall not perish from the Priest, nor Counsel from the Wise, nor the Word from the Prophet; Come, let us smite him, &c.* As if they shou'd have said, He is a false Prophet, and contradicts our teachers, (who have the promise of GOD's perpetual

tual presence) and therefore 'tis no *Injustice* to oppose & persecute such a *Troubler of Israel*: or he is but *one* Prophet; and whatever becomes of *him*, we shall yet have *others*, and enjoy our Church-privileges still.

AGAIN, We might observe, That when any are enrag'd at the Servants of GOD, it is too common for them to *propagate* their undue Prejudices among their Companions.---Then said they, *Come let us*, &c.---They call'd on & stir'd up one another. And by this unhappy means, the *Wise Man's* observation is too often verif'd, *One sinner destroys much Good*.

AGAIN, We might note; Sinners often *lay their heads together* to *plot* against the Just. Then said they, *Come*, and let us *devise Devices* against *Jeremiah*; consult what to do and say against him.

AGAIN, It is observable; One *common* method of *Revenge* is *Defamation & Derision*. They said, Let us *smite* him with the *Tongue*; heap *Reproches* upon him, and make a *Laugh* at him; banter, bely and expose him.--- And thus *Jeremiah* afterwards complains they abus'd him. *Chap. 20. 7, &c.* I am *derision* daily; every one *mocketh* me. For since I spake,--- the word of the LORD was made a *proach* unto me.--- Then I said,--- I will not speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart, as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay. For I heard the *defaming of many*, fear on every side. *Report* say they, and we will *report* it: all my *Familiar*s watched for my halting, saying, *Peradventure* he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, & we shall take our revenge on him. But the

LOR

LORD is with me as a mighty terrible one : therefore my Persecutors shall stumble, and be greatly ashamed, &c.

WE may further observe ; It is often the unhappy fruit of Persons Rage & Prejudices against the LORD's Ministers, that they *despise their Preaching*, and disregard the solemn Messages of GOD deliver'd by them. -- And they said, Let us imite him with the tongue, and *let us not give heed to any of his words*. -- They call them *His words*, the Prophet's, Persons under prejudice against Ministers, are apt to look on what they deliver, as the word of *Man*, and not the word of GOD : and accordingly turn a deaf ear to all their Admonitions ; prophanely scoff at their Warnings and Reproofs ; and revile them as only serving their own Passions, when per-suaded by the Terrors of the LORD.

NOTE again, Sometimes the *Malice & Rage* of sinners proceeds to such a height, as to *conspire by death*, and offer violence to the persons of GOD's servants. This was *Jeremiah's* case ; v. 20. *They have digged a pit for my soul*. They took counsel together, (*as he tells us in Chap. 11, 19.*) saying, Let us cut him off from the Land of the Living, that his name may be no more remembered. -- It was true, but infamous Character given by our Saviour of *Jerusalem* in his day, and was put on Record to the *Jews* shame, and *Christians* admonition ; *Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, & stonest them which are sent unto thee, &c. Matth. 23, 37.* See also a like Charge upon them by the apostle, *1 Thes. 2. 15.*

FINALLY observe, Tis too common among Men

to requite Good with Evil, Jeremiah complains v. 20. That Evil was recompensed him for Good. And so doth the Psalmist, Psal. 109. 4. For my Love they are my Adversaries, &c. And Psal. 35. 12. They rewarded me Evil for Good, to the spoiling of my soul. Some of the best of Zion's Friends have many times been ill-requited by an ungratefull People. But how base is such ingratitude, and how cutting to ingenuous Spirits! How cruel & barbarous, and devilish is such usage! To return Good for Good, is to act like Men: To return Good for Evil, is to act like GOD: but to render Evil for Evil, is to act like Brutes; and to render Evil for Good is to act like Devils. But what will not Malice, Envy, and Hypocrisy do!

THUS I've noted several things from the People's Carriage to the Prophet. Now let us see what was his Conduct under all this wicked and unsufferable Treatment,

HE sadly resented their evil Carriage, laid to heart their Perverseness & dreadful Impiety; and was a mournful Spectator of the Judgments coming upon them. This is imply'd in the Text, and fully express'd in many places. As where he says; My Soul shall weep in secret places for your Pride, and mine eye shall weep sore and run down with tears because the LORD's flock is carry'd away captive. And again; When I would comfort my self against sorrow, my heart is faint in me,--- Oh that I had in the wilderness a Lodging-place of way-faring men, that I might leave my People! for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men; and they bend their tongues like their bows for Lies, &c. Jer. 13. 17.---8. 18.---9. 2.

HE appeal'd to GOD, to vindicate his Innocence, & apply'd to him for Redress of his Difficulties. He carry'd his Complaint to the Throne of Grace, & open'd his Cause to GOD; asserting his own Integrity, and begging Divine appearances for him. v. 19, 20. *Give heed to me, O LORD, and hearken to the voice of them that contend with me. Shall evil be recompensed for good: for they have digged a pit for my soul: remember that I stood before thee to speak good for them, and to turn away thy wrath from them.*

WE may observe here in general, *He makes his Complaint to GOD*; and from hence infer, --- *When the Servants of the LORD meet with Reproaches and Vexations from Men, especially for Righteousness sake, their Way and Wisdom is to bring their Case to GOD*; to shew him their trouble, and pour out their complaint before him †. Thus did holy *Job, Laila, Hezekiah, Hannah*, and others. --- The Saints know that GOD is their chief *Friend*, and permits them to speak to him as a Man to his Friend: Unto whom therefore shou'd they unbosom themselves but to him? --- Moreover, they know, they may depend upon *Secrecy* with him: They can talk over to him the frowardness, and follies of their Relatives or Neighbors; which Charity or Prudence requires them to *conceal* from Men. --- Again, they know that GOD is infinitely *wise & discerning, kind & impartial*: that he cannot mistake their Case, or pervert their words; that he is acquainted with all their Ways, and knows their Thoughts even afar off, and will judge righteous Judgment. And upon this view, they open their Cause unto him *. --- More-

† Psal. 142. 2. * Job. 11. 20. --- 10. 12.

over, they know that GOD is able & ready to relieve the Oppressed, and bear the prayer of the Destitute, and therefore they make him their Refuge, who is a Patron of the Innocent: They spread all their Cares before him, and pour out their Griefs & Repentments into his ear, & bosom. By which means they often obtain Peace & Ease of Mind, and refresh their oppressed Spirits. — This is a Method which all in the present Case shou'd pursue. But then they must see to it, that they mourn in their Complaint after a *godly sort*. They shou'd make their Complaints, in a *penitent* and humble frame, owning the hand of GOD, and acknowledging his Justice, in all they meet with: Also in a *meek* and patient frame; free from all sinfull Passions, revengefull Motions and rancorous Invectives: And in a *charitable* frame; blessing such as curse them, and praying for such as despitefully use them: Finally, with *hope & trust* in GOD; encouraging themselves in the LORD, as David did, in his distress when the People spake of stoning him, 1 Sam. 20.6.

BUT now more particularly, we may observe what the Prophet says in his Complaint and Prayer to GOD. We have first that petition, Give heed to me, O LORD! He had before complain'd that the People whom he preach'd unto, were resolv'd to give no heed unto him. MEN wou'd not hear the Word from his mouth, nor give heed to his Preaching; however, he trusts that GOD will have regard to this labour of Love, and accept him in it. NOTE It is matter of Comfort to faithful Ministers, that though Men slight & despise their Preaching, yet they may hope that GOD will accept & crown their Endeavours.

yours ; and thô Israel be not gathered, yet their Reward is with GOD. — Or, Men wou'd not take notice of his *Grievances*, and do him Justice, he therefore applies himself to GOD, who is a Refuge for the Oppressed ; and refers his Cause to him, who is an upright Judge. 2. d. Thô men will not receive my Complaints ; yet LORD, do thou admit them, and judge between me & my adversaries : *Hearken to the voice of them that contend with me* ; hear how clamorous they are in their false Accusations, and appear for my vindication ; take notice of all their Rage & Spite, and take me under thy Protection ; let them be blasted in their cruel Designs & wicked Attempts ; let *them* be confounded & dismayed ; but let not *me* be confounded nor dismayed †.

AND then he backs his petitions with several Pleas. Shall Evil be recompensed for Good ? Shall such base Ingratitude go unpunish'd ? For they have digged a Pit for my soul : and shall such Malice and Wickedness pass unrevenge'd ? Thou hast seen it, or thou beholdest mischief & Spite to requite it with thine own hand : — Break thou the arm of the wicked. * Save me from all them which persecute me. My Defence is of GOD, who saveth the upright in heart †. Let them curse, but bless thou †. — Remember, that I stood before thee to speak Good for them, and turn away thy wrath from them. He humbly appeals to GOD concerning his Fidelity & Compassion to that sinfull People. 2. d. Thô I have met with many Abuses from them ; yet LORD, thou knowest I have faithfully done my duty as a Prophet, in teaching & praying for their good : Or as he ex-

† Jer. 17. 18. * Psal. 10. 14, &c. † Psal. 7. 1, 10. † Psal. 109. 8.

presses it (in Chap. 17. 16.) *As for me, I have not hastened from being a Pastour to follow thy Instructions; neither have I desired that woful day; thou knowest that which came out of my lips was right before thee.*---Thò I have met with much Opposition, Injury, & Discouragement from them; yet LORD, thou knowest, I have not ceased from my work, nor given over my Labours among them in the Word & Prayer: but have stood in the Gap, & done my utmost to turn away thy wrath from them.---**LORD, remember this.**--- Herein he seems to refer unto some *Promise* of G O D, engaging special mercy to such as tremble at his word, and espouse his cause, and intreat his favour, in a day of wrath on a professing People. He throws himself upon the Divine Pity, and Covenant-faithfulness. *Q. d.* Thò the People forget my Kindness to them, yet, LORD, do Thou remember and accept it. Thò I cannot *prevale* to turn away thy wrath from them, yet, LORD, remember that I faithfully & compassionately *endeavour'd* it: Think upon me, my G O D for good; according to all that I have done for the People: & hide me under the shadow of thy wing in the day of thine Indignation, hastning upon them.--- This is probably the Prophet's *Meaning* in the Text; as may be infer'd from like Expressions else-where. Thus Chap. 15. 15. O L O R D, Thou knowest; remember me, and visit me, and revenge me of (or rather, vindicate & distinguish me from my Persecutors; take me not away, but spare me from thy Long-suffering: know that for thy sake I have suffered Rebuke. And also, Chap. 17. 14, 17. Save me, O LORD, and I shall be saved: for thou art

my Praise. *Be not a terror to me ; Thou art my Hope in the day of evil.*---My dependence is upon thee and my hope in thee for comfort in the worst of times ; let *thy favour* rejoyce my heart, when my *Enemies* do all they can to *terrify* me ; and now such an awfull day of common Calamity is inevitably approaching, LORD, in the midst of my thro'ts let thy Comforts delight my Soul.

FROM the *Text* thus explain'd we might raise several *Observations*. As; That the *true Servants* of GOD and *Friends* of *Zion* will be *resolute & hearty* in seeking the Good of *Jerusalem*, tho' they may be very unworthily requited for it.---*Again*, It becomes the *Servants* of GOD to be very *mournfull Spectators* of the *Sins* of a professing People, and of the *Judgments* inflicted, or threaten'd therefor. --- *Again*, They shou'd labor by all possible methods to prevent *Judgments* coming on a People ; or if come, to remove them.---*Again*, They shou'd keep up a chearfull *Hope* in GOD in the *worst* times, & under the darkest prospects. *Finally*, When they have done their best *Endeavour*, and yet cannot prevail, to turn away Divine Wrath, they may humbly plead it with GOD, that *they have done their Duty* ; and may comfortably expect, that GOD will remember *this*, and think on them for Good, according to all they have done or desired to do ; although the same may be ill resented & ill requited by men. The testimony of a good Conscience may be their rejoycing in the day of Evil, and their Support under the unjust Reproches, & ungrateful Treatment such as they deserye better Usage from.

BUT

BUT the only DOCTRINE, I design to insist upon, is this ;

WHEN a professing People have by their Sin provoked GOD to Anger, it is a Duty incumbent on the Saints & Servants of GOD among them, to use all proper means to turn away the Divine Wrath, and obtain a Recovery of the Divine Favour towards them.

IT is the work & office of GOD's Ministers not only to warn the Wicked and reprove the Unruly but likewise to admonish the Godly, to teach them in the things of GOD, and put them in mind to be ready to every good Work, *Tit. 3. 1.*— My business now is, in the name of CHRIST, and by his help to exhort the Children and Servants of GOD to their Duty, very seasonable at this time, though too much neglected ; I mean the endeavouring to reconcile a provoked GOD to a sinning People, & using proper methods to put a stop to the course of his Judgments, that we may not be consumed utterly.

IN the Doctrin are several Propositions expressed, or imply'd. As,

PROP. I. GOD is angry with his own professing People, when they sin against Him. Sin exposes them as well as others to the wrath and destructive vengeance of the Almighty. An External Profession and Covenant-Privileges are no sure Defense of a People ; no Screen from wasting Judgments, if they sin against the holy One of Israel. GOD sees Sin in his own People, as well as others: and the Provocation in them is not at all the less; nay, 'tis vastly greater.

being aggravated by the Advantages they enjoy above others. — That GOD is angry at Sin in a professing People, might be evidenced from Divine Declarations, Threatnings and Warnings; and from many sorrowfull Examples of Vengeance, &c. — National Sins bring national Judgments every where, But if *Israel*, (the holy Nation) sin, they shall be punish'd *seven times more*.

PROP. II. WHEN GOD's wrath is kindled against provoking People, He is yet reconcilable to them; ready to forgive, and to turn from the fierceness of his holy anger; easy to be intreated, and willing to reverse the sentence of wrath, upon the easiest and most condescending Terms. Hence when he is angry at a People, he often spares them a while, & only threatens and warns them, and uses means to prevent their Ruin. And when he comes to the Execution, he ordinarily begins with fewer and lesser Judgments, proceeding gradually, from gentler strokes to severer scourges *. And he is represented as not knowing how at last to give the fatal blow, & bring total Destruction, even on the obstinately Impenitent. See, *Hos. 6. 4.* and, *Chap. 11. 8, 9.*

PROP. III. THERE are certain Means and ways to appease the Divine Anger, when incensed against a People. And these are Humiliation under the hand of GOD, Deprecation of his Wrath, and reformation of Sin, the procuring Cause thereof. GOD hath so limited the Threatning, that if these duties be generally attended by a People, they may expect a stop of Judgments begun, *Jer. 2. 12. 13. Jer. 2. 12, &c.* And we've Instances of GOD's

Psal. 78. 38. Lev. 26. 18. &c.

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staying his Controversy, & suspending the Inflictions of his Wrath, upon a Peoples thus doing; tho' indeed it were only in Shew and Hypocrisy. *Th Psal. 78. 34--38. So, Jon. 3. 8--10.*

PROP. IV. *A MONG a professing People, even in times of the greatest degeneracy, there is ordinarily a Remnant of GOD's faithful Saints & Servants.* Thus at the times, which our text refers to, tho' all Religion seem'd in a manner to be lost among the Jewish Nation; yet there was *Jeremiah, Baruch* and some few others perhaps, whose hearts were right with GOD. So in *Elijah's* time, when there was so little appearance of Religion among the People of GOD, that *Elijah* complain'd, saying, *I am left alone and they seek my Life*; yet what saith the Answer of GOD to the Prophet? *I have reserved my self seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal.* And the Apostle *Paul* speaking of the Jewish Nation in his day, says, *Even so at this time also, there is a Remnant according to the Election of Grace* || -- *Abraham*, when interceding for Sodom, hop'd there were Fifty Righteous within the City: which Hope of his was not only owing to his Charity (the nature of which Grace is to hope all things, and to think all the Good it can) but was grounded on the common conduct of GOD's Providence, in casting some of his Elect into the most wicked places, and in the most degenerate times maintain a Seed to serve the LORD. And tho' there was not, as *Abraham* hoped, Fifty of GOD's Chosen ones in Sodom, yet there was righteous *Lot*, and his Family in it.

PROP. V. WHEN GOD has a Controversy with his People, it is the Duty of all his Saints and servants among them, to do what they can to turn away his wrath from them, and obtain a blessed Reconciliation. In all approved methods they must do what in them lies, to recover the Divine Favour, and secure the Divine Presence with such a People, which is all their Safety, Glory and Happiness. They shou'd thrust into the Gap, and stand between an offended GOD, and a provoking People; doing their utmost by *interceding* with Him to stop the Current of his Judgments. And then likewise they should endeavor to *repair the Breach*, that Sin has made; and remove the provoking Cause of Divine Wrath, by using most diligently all proper means to effect a true and thorough Reformation among a backsliding People. Thus there is Work, first respecting GOD, and secondly, respecting Men; which they are called to attend.

[1.] THEY shou'd stand before GOD, making Intercession for an afflicted People. This was one method, which *Jeremiah* took to turn away GOD's Wrath, as he professes in our Text: *I stood before thee, to speak Good for them, &c.* *Jeremiah* as a Prophet, foretold the approaching *Ruin* and *Desolation* of *Judah* & *Jerusalem*; and yet we find him, in all the postures of Grief and Anxiety, praying for their *Preservation*; hoping perhaps the Decree were not *absolute*. We do not find him out of frame like *Elijah*, who made Intercession to GOD against *Sodom* & *Gomorrah* like *Jonah*, who quarrel'd with GOD, because He delay'd the Execution of Vengeance on

Niniveh. No; he was far from desiring the evil day, as he professes, *Jer.* 17. 15: Tho he was persecuted, malign'd, and reproached by the People, and tho they lightly esteem'd his Prayers; yet he was a fervent Intercessor for them: for so it becomes the Children of GOD, (who is kind to the evil and unthankfull) to overcome Evil with Good, and to return Blessing for Cursing. Indeed sometimes we find this Man of GOD passionately begging the Divine Appearances for him against his most malignant Persecutors, & prophetically imprecating Judgments upon them; but as to the People in general he was a hearty & constant Intercessor for their peace & welfare; & herein has set a worthy Example to Posterity, which challenges universal Imitation. Now to excite the Servants of GOD hereunto, I shall here briefly represent to them some of those Obligations, which the Saints are under to make intercession for a professing People, among whom they dwell, to turn away the Divine Wrath from them.

Wherefore,

1. **THE** Command of GOD obliges them hereto. A divine Precept constitutes any thing a Duty. Now it is in several places of Scripture expressly enjoyn'd on the Saints to pray for the People of GOD especially in a day of the LORD's anger. Thus *Psal.* 122. 6. *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.* So *Isa.* 62. 6. *Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep his silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in all the earth.*— And in the New-Testament: *Eph.* 6. 18. *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watch thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication*

cation for all Saints. Heb. 13. 3. Remember them (in Prayer) that are in bonds, as bound with them. Jam. 5. 16. Pray one for another, that ye may be healed. These are plain Commands to our purpose, & evidently infer the Saints Obligation to the Duty before us. It is not then a matter of Indifferency, to be attended or neglected as Men please; but they are oblig'd to the doing of it, by the inviolable Authority of GOD, their great Lawgiver and King.

2. *THIS is very pleasing to GOD.* The LORD loveth the gates of *Sion*, and desireth it for his habitation. And tho' he will be angry with his People, if they forsake his Law, and will visit their iniquity with stripes; yet *he doth not afflict willingly*. Judgment is his *strange* work. He *delighteth in Mercy*. And when his anger is kindled against *Israel*, he doth not *at once* utterly cast off his People, and forsake his Inheritance. He for a long while keeps some Reserves of Kindness for them; sympathizes with them under their Adversity; in his love and pity he long bears with and forbears them; and *in all their affliction he is afflicted*, as the Prophet tells us, *Isa. 63. 9.* And in such a case, *He looks to Jee, if there be none to help*; to call upon him in the day of trouble; to turn away his anger, and stir up his bowels, and set his wisdom & power to work, to bring Deliverance. *Ezek. 22. 30.* *I sought for a man among them, that should make up the Hedge, and stand in the Gap before me for the Land, that I should not destroy it.* — If there are none to be found, the LORD is represented as brought to a stand, and not knowing what to do: *Isa. 59. 16.* *He saw that there was no man, and wonder'd that there*

there was no Intercessor,---was displeas'd & amaz'd; astonish'd as it were, not knowing what method to take.--- Whereas if any of his Saints stir up themselves to call on GOD, and stand before him to speak good for his afflicted Israel; with *this* he is well-pleased. The LORD hearkens, and hears, and a Book of Remembrance is written before him for them that fear him, and that think upon his name†. The LORD taketh pleasure in them, that hope in his Mercy‖, and are sincere Suppliants at the Throne of Grace for his People; and *the Prayer of the Righteous* is, eminently on such an occasion, his Delight*. *Moses*, that memorable Intercessor for Israel, is emphatically styled *the Man of GOD*; and the LORD is said, to have spoken to him *face to face*. So, *David* was much in Prayer for *Jerusalem*; and he is called *a Man after GOD's own Heart*. So, *Daniel*, when interceding for *Jerusalem*, had an *Angl* from Heaven dispatch'd to him, with an Answer of Peace; approving his serious Address to this Duty, and pronouncing him a *Favorite of Heaven*. Dan. 9. 20, &c. *Whiles I was presenting my supplication before the Lord my God, for the holy mountain of my God; yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel,--- being caused to fly swiftly, touched me---*, and he talked with me, & said, O *Daniel*,--- *At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth; and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved.*--- GOD is very ready to hear the Prayer of the upright, especially when it is for his *holy mountain*. And when the Saints pour out their hearts before him in such

† Mal. 3. 16. ‖ Mal. 147 11. * Prov. 15. 8.

a Prayer, it renders them *greatly belov'd*, and very acceptable to him.--- Which consideration affords a very strong argument to enforce the duty upon them; since they are bidden to *chuse the things that please GOD*, and to walk worthy of the LORD, unto all pleasing.

3. *THE* Glory of GOD requires *this* of them. The Name and Honour of GOD is what his Saints shou'd be very *tender* of, and *jealous* for: This shou'd be dearer to them, than all other interests and concerns whatsoever; This challenges their *first* care and *highest* regards. Now the Glory of GOD's Name is *eminently* concern'd in the *Peace* and *Prosperity* of his *professing* People.---When the ways of *Zion* mourn, and her gates are desolate; when the horn of *Israel* is cut off, and the beauty of *Jacob* cover'd with a cloud, in the day of GOD's holy indignation: when the adversaries of *Zion* mock at her Sabbaths; and they that honoured her, despise her; and they that pass by, hiss and wagg their head at the daughter of *Jerusalem*, saying, Is this the city, that men call the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth;---I say, when it is thus, the Name of GOD suffers, and his manifestative Glory is *eclipsed*. Hence the LORD is said to have *had pity for his holy Name*, when he turned the captivity of *Jacob*, Ezek. 36. 21.--- Will not all the Friends of GOD then be *concern'd* for his suffering honour; and from this Principle, be fervent Intercessors for *Zion*? This was the governing *Motive* with the *Royal Psalmist*, when he made that Prayer for *Jerusalem*, *Peace be within thy walls*; (Psal. 122. 7.) For he adds, (V. 9) *Because of the house of*
the

the LORD our GOD, *I will seek thy Good.* --- Holy *Jeremiah* was sway'd by this argument, and therefore made use of it to strengthen his faith, in pleading for *Zion*. *Jer. 14. 21. Do not abhor us; for thy names sake do not disgrace the throne of thy Glory.* --- So, *Joshua*, (*Chap. 7, 8, 9.*) O Lord, what shall I say, when *Israel* turn their backs before their enemies? --- And what wilt thou do unto thy great Name?

IN praying for *Israel*, the Saints shew their Love to the House and Cause of GOD; and their Desire toward the Remembrance of his Name. --- Besides, by their prayers to GOD, they make an open Acknowledgment of their dependence on him for needfull salvations, and their belief of his ability & willingness to save his People, &c. And thus they give him the Glory of his Sovereign Dominion, Power, Wisdom, and Goodness. --- Moreover, hereby they discover a generous and enlarged mind; which is an ornament and glory to Religion, and ultimately reflects honor on GOD. --- Which Considerations speak the duty of Prayer, to be very incumbent on the Saints, in a day of *Israel's* distress. The tender Regard they owe to the Glory of GOD, demands this of them.

4. THE Regard, which they owe to the professing People of GOD, among whom they dwell, requires it of them. To illustrate this Argument, consider, ---

(1.) THEY owe a peculiar regard to the Welfare and Prosperity of the Place and People, where and among whom they dwell. The Public has a Right to the benefit of their Prayers, and all other good Offices. Every one should seek the Good of the

Country

country and Community, where Divine Providence
 sets his Lot. No man is born to *seek his own things* ;
 but to *serve his own Generation*, according to the
 Will of GOD. Every one shou'd be a Well-wisher
 specially to the Land of his *Nativity* : and if it be
 a *Christian Land*, all the Servants of CHRIST are
 under *double obligations*, to concern themselves for
 the welfare of it. Where there is *near Relation*,
 there shou'd be also *tender Affection*. All the *Pro-*
fessors of Religion are very nearly *allied* to one a-
 nother. They are *Fellow-brethren* by Nature, as
 Men ; and by religious Profession, as *Christians* :
 and it is requir'd of them, that they *love as Bre-*
thren ; having compassion one of another, being pi-
 full, and courteous, 1 *Pet.* 3. 8. Yea, they are
ellow-members ; being all baptized into *one Body* ;
 (1 *Cor.* 12. 13.) And the Members shou'd all have
 the *same Care one for another*, and every one for
 the whole ; and whether *one* member suffer, all the
 members suffer with it : or the *Body* in general
 suffer, all the members in particular shou'd suffer
 with it. *Rom.* 12. 15. *Weep with them that weep.*
Lev. 19. 3. *Remember them which suffer adversity, as*
loving your selves also in the body ; Members of one
 and the same Body with them. --- Queen *Esther* (of
 glorious memory) so lov'd the *Jews*, (then the only
 professing People of GOD, and the Nation she be-
 long'd to) that when Royal Letters were written to
 destroy them, she *put her Life in her hand* ; and
 went in unto the King, uncalled, which was contra-
 ry to Law, to beg the Lives of her Nation ; thus
 arguing with her self, (*Esth.* 8. 6.) *For how can I let-*
ure to see the evil that shall come unto my people ?

or how can I bear to see the destruction of my kingdom? — This Consideration was one motive of King David's noble Resolution, to seek the good of Jerusalem: Psal. 122. 8. *For my brethren and companions sakes, I will now say, Peace be within the city.* So great was the Love of this good King unto Zion, that of her he says, (Psal. 87. 7.) *All my springs are in thee.* Consider, ---

(2.) PRAYER is necessary, if they would obtain from GOD the Mercies, which they desire, and the People need. The Saints must ask, if they would receive; and seek, if they would find. Even when GOD has promis'd to do great things for his People, yet for the exercise of their Faith, and to put honour upon the Duty of Prayer, He demands that his Favours be asked for. Ezek. 36. 36, 37. *I the LORD have spoken, and will do it.* Thus saith the LORD GOD, *I will yet for this be inquired by the house of Israel to do it for them:* Some render it, *for the house of Israel, or on their behalf.* The Saints are the LORD's Remembrancers: They should, in the Name of the House of Jacob, inquire after GOD, and seek his face, in the day of trouble. Unless Prayer be made of the Church of GOD in such a season, a People cannot expect the Returns of divine Favour. Consider, ---

(3.) THE Saints have a powerful Interest in Heaven, and by their earnest Prayers do often turn away Wrath from a sinful People. Long and happy Experience testifies to the Truth of the Psalmist's Observation, Psal. 34. 15. *The eyes of the Lord are on the Righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.* We have heard with our Ears, and our Fathers have

told us, what Answers of Prayer they knew in their days: and the holy *Scriptures* tell us, what the Prayer of Faith has done in the times of old; how it has many a time *stay'd the hand of GOD*, when lifted up to execute vengeance.

Thus the fervent Supplications of holy *Lot* obtain'd deliverance for *Zoar*, when the LORD condemn'd *Sodom*, and the Cities about it, with an utter overthrow. Thus *Moses*, being a man mighty in Prayer, often prevailed with GOD by his intercessions for the Salvation of *Israel*. *Psal. 106. 23.* He said that he wou'd destroy them, had not *Moses* his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath. Thus when *Sennacherib* invaded *Judab*, and thought to win the fenced cities thereof for himself, *Hesekiah* the King, and *Isaiab* the Prophet prayed, and cry'd to Heaven; and the Lord saved *Jerusalem* from the Enemy. So when the *Jews* were in Captivity, and the walls of *Jerusalem* broken down, *Nebemiah* wept, & fasted, and prayed to the GOD of Heaven, that he would grant him favour before the King of *Persia*, and incline him to smile upon his good design to rebuild the City and House of GOD. And in answer to his Request, the LORD so inclin'd the King's heart, that *Nebemiah* has left it on record, *The king granted me according to the good hand of my God upon me.*

THESE Instances may suffice to show, that the Saints have a strong Interest in the Court of Heaven; and by their Prayers do often prevail to keep off, moderate, or remove Judgments from a People; and sometimes obtain a Reprieve even for places ripe for Ruin and devoted to Confusion. Indeed

in some extraordinary cases, the LORD declares, as in Jer. 15.1. *Tho' Moses and Samuel stood before me yet my mind could not be towards this people.* And as in Ezek. 14. 14. *Tho' these three men, Noah, Daniel and Job were in the land, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God: --- Yet these words plainly carry the Intimation, that such men have Power with GOD and that he will ordinarily forgive much, and forbear long, for their sakes.* Hence when the LORD is unalterably resolv'd to bring speedy Destruction on a People, he bids his Servants not to pray for them any more; because he wou'd not be put to the pain of denying their ardent requests. See Jer. 7. 16.

Now since the Godly have such an Interest in the Throne of Grace; and since GOD expects their Intercessions; and the Public has a just Title to the benefit of them; it hence evidently follows, that they ought to give themselves unto prayer & supplication.

5. *IN so doing, they will consult their own Peace and Welfare. They shall not seek God's face in vain.* If he grant the Petitions that they ask, they will have their share in the public Tranquillity and Prosperity: The prospect whereof shou'd encourage them to Prayer. Jer. 29. 7. *Seek the peace of the city, and pray unto the Lord for it; for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.*

BUT however, their Prayers shall return in their own bosoms, and shall not return empty. Ordinarily, it shall go well with praying Saints, tho' it will with a sinning People. Such are sometimes exempted from common Calamities. GOD orders the destroying Angel not to touch them. They

mark'd for favor and protection. (Ezek. 9. 4, 6.) And this prospect shou'd encourage them to pray. Zeph. 2. 3. *Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.*—Howbeit, their prayers shall be accepted of GOD, and abound to their good Account in the day of the LORD. They are all hung upon the file; and shall be remember'd, and recompensed in that day when a Cup of cold Water given to a Disciple, shall not be forgotten, nor lose it's Reward. There is a blessed Promise in Psal. 122. 6. *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: They shall prosper that love thee:* Which as it intimates, that they are *not* Zion's Friends, who do not pray for her welfare; so it assures a Reward to them that are her praying Friends.

HENCE from a principle of Self-Love, the Saints are strongly oblig'd to the Duty under consideration. Their own Interest is a Bond upon them, and bespeaks their diligent attendance to the Work.

6. *THE Saints are many times oblig'd to pray for their People; when a day of GOD's anger is passing over them, because their own Sins have conspir'd to pull down Judgments upon them.* The Sins of GOD's own Children, which in times of Temptation they fall into, are peculiarly offensive to the pure Eyes of his glorious Holiness & Justice; and are instrumental, as well as the Sins of open and daring Transgressors, to kindle a fire in Zion, and call down Vengeance on a Place. The most zealous Magistrates, the most faithfull Ministers, and even the best of GOD's people, can seldom acquit themselves from contributing to the publick guilt and misery, by their own personal sins, or by their being

being someways accessory to the sins of others. Sometimes a *Jonah*, the LORD's Prophet, the best man in the Ship, may more immediately occasion the Storm. Sometimes a good old *Eli*, the High-Priest of Israel, may by a criminal want of Zeal, and a foolish Connivence at ways of wickedness, provoke GOD to make a Breach upon his house, and a dreadful Gap in the Walls of Jerusalem. Sometimes a *David*, King in Israel, and a man after GOD's own heart, may by great transgressions provoke GOD to send a wasting Pestilence on his People, or lay them open to the devouring Sword. Sometimes a *Solomon*, the wisest man, may by his foolish ways provoke GOD to stir up Adversaries against Israel, and make a breach among the Tribes of his People. Sometimes an holy *Hezekiah* may by the Pride of his heart, & a criminal Ingratitude to GOD (as well as a wicked *Manasseh* by his Murder & other horrid sins) have a peculiar hand in bringing wrath upon Judah and Jerusalem.--- Thus the most eminent and faithful Servants of GOD may sometimes by their own Provocations help to lay open the Sluices of divine Vengeance, and make a Gap to let in Wrath upon a backsliding People. And it is very rare, that any of the Saints can exempt themselves altogether from this Imputation.

Now surely it must needs be very *congruous*, & most agreeable to the Rules of *Equity* and *Propriety*, that GOD's Children and Servants deeply sympathize with a People under afflictive Visitations which *they themselves* have been in a greater or less degree *Instruments* of procuring to them; and deprecate those Judgments, which their own Sins threaten to bring upon them.

7. **T H E** Saints shou'd be led to this duty, by the Example of **G O D**'s Servants in all Ages. They have the practice of the Saints in all times of the World to confirm them herein. Thus the *Psalmist* in innumerable places, breaths out his heart's desire and prayer to **G O D** for Israel: Thus particularly in *Psal.* 102. 13, 14. *Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion; for the time to favor her, yea the sett time is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones & favour the dust thereof.*--- So, *Psal.* 137. 5, 6. *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget it's dexterity. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.*--- And what shall I more say? for the time wou'd fail me, to tell of *Gideon*, and *Joshua*, and *Mordecai*, and *Nebe-miah*, and the Prophets, of *Moses*, and *Aaron* among the Priests of the **L O R D**, and *Samuel* among them that call upon his name; with all those other Worthies, who thro' faith & prayer obtained deliverances for Jacob.---It was a noble saying of the Prophet *Samuel* *, *The Lord will not forsake his people for his great names sake:* --- Moreover, as for me, God forbid, that I should sin against the Lord, in ceasing to pray for you. As for *Moses*; he had such a Sense of his Duty in this Matter, and such an unalienable Love to his People, that he closely follow'd the **L O R D** with his continual Intercessions for them, until the **L O R D** spake unto him saying, as in *Deut.* 9. 13, 14. *I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people; Let me alone, that I may destroy them.* And then the **L O R D** made him an

* 1 Sam. 12. 22, 23.

Offer, as it follows; *And I will make of thee a Nation mightier and greater than they.*— Yet this cou'd not bribe the man of GOD into Silence: but he *went on* to pray for his People, as we read in the following Verses. And he *died* blessing the children of *Israel*†. So great was his Zele for them; notwithstanding the Abuses he had receiv'd from them; which might seem enō to have stopt his mouth, and turn'd his heart from them.— Thus we have the Saints in *former* ages for our *Pattern*. These things were written for our Admonition and Imitation, upon whom the Ends of the World are come. They reproch our Neglect, and countenance our Discharge of the Duty under consideration.

FROM the Premisses, I think the Conclusion is sufficiently evident, That the Godly among a degenerate People ought to be Intercessors for them in the days of wrath, which roll over them. But it is time for me now to turn the Observation into an Exhortation.

Wherefore, *LET me call upon them, that fear the LORD among you, to give your selves unto Prayer & Intercession.* The LORD be blessed that (as degenerate as the times are) we have still a Remnant among us of the *Seed of Jacob*, who have Power with GOD, and are men for the Gap; *qualified* to stand in the Breach; and O that they might be more & more *spirited* thus to do! Let me therefore exhort every *Jonah*, to arise & call upon his GOD, if so be that GOD will think upon us, that we perish not||. Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem*. Gather your selves together; before the fierce anger of

† Deut. 33. 1. || Jonah 1. 6. * Psal. 122. 6.

he LORD come upon us: Seek ye the LORD.
 All ye meek of the earth: Arise, cry out in
 the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out
 your heart like water before the face of the LORD.
 Trust in him at all times; ye People, pour out your
 heart before him: GOD is a refuge for us: And
 let the Priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep
 between the porch and the altar; and let them say,
 Spare thy people O LORD! And then it may
 be the LORD will be jealous for his Land, and will
 speak peace to his people and to his saints. — Le-
 vid. *it is now a day of Jacob's Trouble; by whom
 shall he arise?* It is a day of darkness & perplexity;
 and a time of rebukes from GOD. Thro the wrath
 of the LORD of hosts the Land is darkned; and the
 City goeth up to Heaven. And in such
 day as this, the LORD looks to see if their be
 one to help by their prayers; and doth wonder
 there be no Intercessor. O let there not be occa-
 sion to renew that Complaint of the Prophet, (Isa.
 4. 7.) *There is none that calleth upon thy name, that
 turneth up himself to take hold of Thee.* If the
 mouths of GOD's Children are shut, and a spirit
 of Prayer for Zion be wanting, it will be a threat-
 ning Symptom. Such a stupid prayerless Frame
 is very criminal in it self, a high Provocation to
 GOD, as well as an awful Judgment on a People;
 and is a sad prognostick of Wrath to the uttermost
 coming upon them. As we are taught from, Ezck.
 2. 30, 31. *I sought for a man among them, that should
 take up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me
 of the Land, that I should not destroy it: but I found*

Zeph. 1. 1. 2. 3. Dan. 2. 19. Psal. 62. 8. Joel. 2. 17, 18.

none; therefore I have poured out mine Indignation upon them, &c. Whereas on the other hand, Where the Spirit of Prayer prevails among the Godly in the several orders and degrees of men, and the Children of GOD are awakened to cry mightily unto him, this looks like a comfortable Promise, as if the LORD were coming to such People in the paths of Mercy & Kindness. Hence when GOD had designs of Love towards Jerusalem he promis'd (*Isa. 62. 6, 7.*) as a Preparatory for an Earnest of approaching Salvations, that he would stir up some to be fervent & constant in their Intercessions to him. — *Oh that there might be this Token of Good, this happy Symptom found on us!* That the Light might dawn upon us in our present Clouds and Darkness! — Let *Moses* the Man of GOD, and *Aaron* his Priest, take their Censers, and stand between GOD and his People, and make Atonement for us. Let *Hezekiah* the Ruler, and *Isaiah* the Prophet together, cry to Heaven for Divine Reliefs. Yea, for this let every one that is godly, pray to the LORD, in a time wherein he may be found. **Pray, Pray, Pray,** (as the Martyr said) **never more need than now.** This is a Generation-Service, which even the poorest and lowliest of the People may attend. The least & weakest may be the Pillars of a Place, and instrumental Servants of a People, by their powerfull Supplications. They that can do little in a Civil Capacity may do much in their Spiritual Capacity, by their Prayers. Hear then, ye Righteous! Consider, and act up to your Character, given in *Isa. 62. 6.* *Ye shall make mention of the LORD,* or are the LORD's Remembrance

membrancers. Awake up, and watch unto Prayer. Resolve with the Psalmist, Psal. 122. 9. *For my brethren and companions sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good.* And with the Prophet, Isa. 62. 1. *For Zions sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalems sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.* Whatever you make mention of besides, you must be sure remember *Zion*, and not leave the public out of your Prayers. Let your Closets and your Families bear witness, that you pray particularly for the Peace of our Jerusalem, as those that prefer it above your chief Joy. Deprecate all that destroys our Peace, and stirs up Divine Anger against us. Explore the Returns of Divine Favour towards us, and all that which is necessary to prepare for and entitle to the same. Beg that GOD would take away all Iniquity, which stains our Glory, and withhold good things from us: that he would heal our backslidings, receive us graciously, and love us freely. Beg, that he would pour out his HOLY SPIRIT on Magistrates, and Ministers, and on all his People; and succeed proper means used for promoting general Repentance among us; that Glory may still dwell in our Land. All that have any Interest at the Throne of Grace, are this day solemnly called upon to lift up their fervent Cries to GOD, whom is all our Help; and by their Prayers to emptying the Vials of Divine Wrath, which the sins of this People are so constantly filling up. It is time to seek the LORD till he come, & rain Righteousness

teousness; and Showers of Blessings on his People.

BUT then if you would be heard in your Supplications, you must *take heed how you pray*. Let me hint a few things here, by way of Direction.

(1.) *YOU must pray, confessing the Publick Guilt in the first place humbling your Souls before GOD for your own Sins, and then for the Sins of others.* Herein you have holy *Daniel* for an Example, Dan 9: 20. *I was speaking, and praying and confessing my Sin, and the Sin of my People Israel; and presenting my supplication before the LORD my GOD for the holy mountain, &c.* His Prayer and Confession you may read, in the foregoing Context. — You have also the Example of pious *Ezra*: See the 9th Chapter of his Book: You have likewise the Example of godly *Nebemiah*; who when he pray'd day & night, for the Children of Israel, did also confess the Sins of the Children of Israel; his own Sins, & the Sins of his Father's House; the Sins of their Kings & Princes, & Priests, & Prophets, & Fathers, & of the People. See the first & ninth Chapters of *Nebemiah's* Book. And the whole Book of *Jeremiah's* Prophecy, as well as that of his Lamentations, are bound with *Humiliations*, and with *Confessions* of the Sins of GOD's People. — It has been the Temper & Practice of the Saints in all Ages to mourn the Publick Guilt, when asking for Publick Mercies to confess the Sins of the Times & Places, in which they liv'd; the Sins of all Orders and Degrees of Persons; the Sins of Magistrates, Ministers and People. It is the Character of the Godly, that they *sigh and cry for all the Abominations, that are done*

in the midst of *Jerusalem* †. Even thus must you (Our praying Saints) humble your Souls before GOD, for the Sins that are found among us; and in the name of our Rulers, and Priests, and People of all degrees, make penitent Confessions to the LORD, if you expect to be heard in your Supplications for the Restoring of his Favor and Pity towards his Land.

Again,

(2.) *YOU must pray justifying of GOD.* You must make such humble Acknowledgements, as those, to the Glory of GOD:— *The Lord is righteous; for we have rebelled against his Commandment. It is of the LORD's Mercies that we are not consumed; because his Compassions fail not* ||. — O LORD, *Righteousness* belongeth unto thee, but unto us *Confusion of Faces*, as at this day, because we have sinned against thee *. — After all that is come upon us for our evil Deeds, Thou our GOD hast punished us *less* than our Iniquities deserve. O LORD GOD of Israel, thou art righteous: *We cannot stand before thee*, because of our *Trespases* †. — Let not all our Trouble seem little: Howbeit, thou art *just* in all that is brought upon us; for *thou* hast done *right*, but we have done *wickedly* ||. — Such Acknowledgments as these you must make, with GOD's Servants of old, when praying for this sinful People. You must, in their Name, take to your selves the Shame and Blame of their Destruction, ascribing Righteousness to your Maker, and sanctifying the HOLY ONE of Israel.

† Ezek. 9. 4 || Lam. 1. 18 — 3. 22. * Dan. 9. 7, &c.

† Ezra 9. 13, 15. || Neh. 9. 33.

(3.) *YOU*

(3.) *YOU should mix Thanksgivings with your Prayers.* Thus you are directed in 1 Tim. 2. 1. So in Phil. 4. 6. *In every thing, by Supplication, with Thanksgiving let your Requests be made known to God.* Thus, devout Ezra, when confessing the People's Sins, rehearsing GOD's Judgments, and imploring his Mercies, took occasion to praise GOD for Deliverance begun: Ezra 9. 8, 9. *And now for a little space, Grace hath been shewed from the Lord our God, — to give us a little Reviving, — our God hath not forsaken us in our Bondage, &c.* So we read in Neh. 9. 5. that the pious Levites, upon a solemn day of Fasting & Prayer, began their Confessions of Sin with Thanksgiving and Praise, saying, *Blessed be thy glorious Name, which is exalted above all Blessing and Praise, &c.* And afterwards they go on to celebrate particular Instances of Divine Goodness. So likewise the 106th Psalm is a beautiful Mixture of Confessions, Prayers, and Praises. It principally contains a History of Israel's Rebellions and the Judgments inflicted therefor. And yet begins and ends with *Hallelujah*: for we must sing of Mercy, as well as Judgment †.

(4.) *YOU must pray in Faith: humbly hoping in the Promises of GOD, and entirely Depending on the mediation of JESUS CHRIST, for obtaining the Favours you are asking.* You must pray in the Faith of our Father Abraham, that eminent and famous Intercessor. The LORD has given gracious Encouragement to his People to hope, that the Prayer of Faith shall save the Afflicted †. You must maintain and exercise a holy Trust in

the Promises of GOD, hope in his Mercy, & rely on his Fathfullness. 1 Joh. 5. 14. *This is the Confidence, that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his Will, He heareth us* --- You must bring the **LORD JESUS CHRIST** in the Arms of your Faith, hold him up as the expiatory Sacrifice, and the only Atonement for the Congregation; and place your whole Affiance in his Merits and Intercession for the Audience of your Prayers. Let your Supplications be offer'd up in the Name of the blessed Mediator **CHRIST JESUS**. Pray in some such Words as those of the Prophet *Daniel*, (Chap. 9. 17, 18.) *O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and cause thy face to shine upon thy desolate Sanctuary, for the Lord's sake. O my God, incline thine ear and hear---, for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies.*

5. *TO U must pray fervently and importunately.* 'Tis the *inwrought fervent* Prayer of the Righteous, that avails much. They then, that would obtain the Blessing, must *wrestle* with GOD, and agnize in their Prayers, for the Peace & Welfare of Israel. You must pray, as those that have at Heart the Public Concerns; as those that indeed desire not the wofull Day; as those that are affected with every Token of GOD's holy Anger, are afraid of his Judgments; and tremble at his wrathfull Presence. This made *Moses* so importunate. Deut. 9. 18, 19. *I fell down before the Lord as at the first forty days and forty nights; I did neither eat bread, nor drink water: because of all your sins which ye sinned in doing wickedly in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him*

him to anger. For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith the Lord was wroth against you to destroy you. The Prophet *Jeremiah* was the more fervent in his Prayers for Jerusalem, because the Destruction from GOD, threatned to be bro't upon it, was a Terror to him. How patheticall & melting are his Complaints, Jer. 4. 19. *My bowels, my bowels, I am pained at my very heart, &c.* — You must be under the like Impressions; and from awfull Resentments of the Divine Displeasure, as well as from tender Compassions to this poor afflicted People, you must be very earnest in your supplications for them. Beware of Formality and Remissness in your Prayers. As *Israelites* indeed, you must plead hard with GOD, and fill every one his mouth with Arguments. Take to your selves Words and plead as in *Dan. 9.* O LORD I beseech thee let thine anger be turned away from thy City Jerusalem, thy holy Mountain: because for our sins thy People are become a reproch to all about us. O LORD hear; O LORD, forgive, O LORD hearken and do, defer not, for thine own sake, O my GOD for thy city & thy people are called by thy name. — Plead the Glory of GOD as *Moses* did, *Deut. 9. 26-19.* And as *Jeremiah* likewise did, in those moving Words (in *Jer. 14. 7, 8, 9, 19, 21.*) which are too many to be here repeated. (6.) YOU must pray without Ceasing. You must continue instant in Prayer, and not faint, nor be discouraged. You must never hold your Peace day nor night. You must cry mightily to GOD and give him no Rest, till he stir up his Strength and come, and save his People. Ye that make mention

mention of the LORD, keep not silence, and give him no Rest, till he establish, and till he make our Jerusalem a Praise in the Earth || Thus Jeremiah stood before GOD to speak Good for his Jerusalem; which may denote the *Constancy*, as well as *Vehemency*, of his Supplications.

(7.) *YOU must pray with due Resignation to the Holy Will of GOD.* Though you must be fervent and constant in your Prayers; yet you must not go about to limit the Holy One of Israel, or prescribe to Him, either as to Methods, or Seasons. You must intirely submit it to Him, in his infinite Wisdom, to answer your Prayers for Zion, in what Way, and at what Time he pleaseth. You must refer all to his good Pleasure, as the Psalmist, in *Psal. 51. 18.* Do Good in thy good pleasure unto Zion. You must leave it to Him to bestow what Good he pleases; by what Means, & in what Season, he shall see fit. You must wait patiently for the LORD, without Discontent or Despondency under delays of favourable Appearances. As he, *Ila. 8. 17.* I will wait upon the LORD, who hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him. It is said of him that believeth that he maketh not haste *, doth not impatiently anticipate the Time set in GOD's Counsils, but with a fixed heart quietly waits for his Salvation. Indeed there is a lawful provoking calling on him to hasten; which has been practis'd by the Saints, as you see in *Psal. 70. 1, 5. Psal. 102. 13. Rev. 6. 10.* & else where. But this proceeded from a Spirit of Faith in them, & was not without a full Submission to the Divine Determinations.

* *Ijai. 62. 7, 8. Ijai. 28. 16.*

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(8.) YOUR Prayers must be accompany'd with the diligent Use of all proper Methods, tending to engage the Return of Divine Favour; & obtain the Averting of GOD's righteous Displeasure. Prayer, without the use of Means (when in our power) is Presumption, and profane Mockery of GOD. They are some of the main Articles of Prayer; ——— The GOD would direct to all proper Means, quicken the diligent Application of them, and follow regular Endeavours with his efficacious Blessing. --- If then you would have Success in your Prayers, you must joyn with them the Use of all wise and good Methods to turn away GOD's Anger from a sinful People. Thus, You must inquire into the Grounds of GOD's Controversy with them, and endeavour to get the same removed; that the Provocations being taken away, his Wrath may cease. --- You must carefully call your selves to an Account for what you have done to provoke GOD to Anger against the People; repent of and reform all that is amiss in your selves, and take Care to make and keep Peace between GOD and your own Souls. You must sanctify your selves, there must be a Personal Reformation of Heart and Life, if you expect GOD to return in a way of Favour, and do Wonders among his People †. Let every *Israelite*, as once even *Ninevite* ||, not only cry mightily to GOD, but also turn from his evil way; and then who can tell but GOD will yet return and repent, and leave a Blessing behind him? Lift up your Heart unto your Hands unto GOD in the Heavens *. Lift up holy Hands †. Let the work of Reformation (to

†. *Josb.* 3. 5. || *Jonah* 3. 9, 10. * *Lam.* 3. 41. † 1 *Tim.*

great Charity to the Public) *begin at Home* ; but let it not *end* there. You must keep *your selves* from the Sins of the Times ; and you must also contribute what you can to promote a happy Reformation of the *Times* ; endeavor the Amendment of *others*, as much as in you lies. — But this introduces the other general Head propos'd ; which is, —

[2.] *THE Saints shou'd zealously and resolutely labour, in their respective Places, to promote the Reformation of a degenerate People ; to suppress those Sins, that ripen the Land for Judgments ; and to propagate that Righteousness, which exalteth a Nation ; that Repentance, which (according to the Tenor of the Covenant) heals up the Breach, that Sin hath made, and turns away GOD's Anger from a backsliding Generation. If a professing People humble themselves under the Judgments of GOD, & pray, & seek His face, & turn from all their evil ways ; then will He hear in Heaven, and forgive their Sin, and heal their Land †. But if they turn not to him that smiteth them, he will punish them yet seven times more ; his Hand will be stretched out still, and his Anger not turned away || ; notwithstanding the earnest Intercessions of his Servants and Children for them. The Prayers and Tears of the Saints will be but like Water spilt on a Rock, as to any real Advantage to an evil and untoward Generation ; and will not save them from deserved Ruin, except they likewise repent, and become a willing & obedient People. Indeed the Humiliations & Prayers of the Righteous*

† 2 Chron. 7. 14. || Isa. 59. 12, 13.

may obtain, for an unreformed Place, some little *Respite*, or Reprieve for a while from Destruction. But unless there be a *Public Repentance* and thorough Reformation among a sinfull People, they can't expect the Recovery of Divine Favour. The Inhabitants of the Land must themselves learn Righteousness from Divine Threatnings and Judgments; else the LORD will not visit them with his Salvation, nor be appeased to them. — Hence the Servants of GOD must use their endeavors, to *find out* and *reform* those Sins and Sinners that provoke GOD to anger, if they wou'd prevent or remove the Effects of his fiery Indignation. It is remarkable, when *Achan* had committed a Trespass in the accursed thing, and wrath fell on all the Congregation of Israel for it, that *Joshua* and the Elders, betaking themselves to Fasting and Prayer, without sutable Care to find out and punish the Sin they probably suspected, met with that Rebuke from GOD, (*Josh. 7. 10, &c.*) *The Lord said to Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou upon thy face? Israel hath sinned; I will not be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed Person from amongst you. Up sanctify the People, &c.* This shou'd awaken the Saints to add unto their ardent Prayers the most active & vigorous Endeavours, in their several Stations, and according to their respective Capacities, to effect a blessed Reformation among us; and oppose the growth of Vice and Licentiousness, which is too much become the genius and Complexion of the unhappy Times we live in, to the great dishonour of GOD, the reproch of our christian Profession, the injury of our common Welfare,

Welfare, and the danger of our being laid waste by yet heavier Calamities, unless a speedy and general *Repentance* prevent. To promote *this* is therefore the Duty of all, and will be the Endeavor of such as have a just Regard to the public Good.

BELIEVE it; without a thro' Reformation, there will be no Remission of the crying Sins of our Land; and unactive Wishes, are not sufficient to obtain the desired Reformation. Indeed we must acknowledge and affirm constantly, that it *belongs to GOD alone* (as the efficient Cause) to revive dying Religion among his People. Means and Instruments can't, by any Virtue or Efficacy of their own, produce this great and noble Effect; but need a Divine Hand to actuate and succeed them. It is only the Ministration of the Spirit, that can turn away Ungodliness from Jacob, and cause Righteousness to run down Jerusalem's Streets, as a River. And GOD expects to be *inquired of*, to be *sought to* by Prayer, till he come, and bestow this comprehensive Blessing upon us. Nevertheless, he expects also, that his praying Saints use their utmost *Endeavours* in the application of all those Means, that have a Tendency to the Revival of GOD's Work among us. You must study the best Methods or Expedients for this End, & every one in his place, according to his Talent, put them in Execution. You must search out the Impediments or Obstructions, that are in the way; & seek the speedy Removal of them. You must *stand up for God against the Workers of Iniquity*, and labour to *teach Transgressors his Ways*.—Prayers and Tears are not all the Weapons, to be used in the defense of GOD's Cause among a declining People:

ple : those are not the only Instruments, which the work of Reformation calls for. Unactive Supplications are like be as successless and insignificant as prayerless Endeavours. You must not sit still and idly neglect the due Use of Means, looking that GOD shou'd do the whole Work alone. You must not sit down *astonied*, (as *Ezra* in a like case) supposing all Attempts desperate, and in vain. No but GOD expects, that you be *up & doing* ; that in the strength of the LORD JESUS CHRIST you go forth to labor, and employ all your Opportunities with Zele & Vigor, in setting forward and carrying on a Work of so great Importance to the Glory of GOD, to the Publick Safety and Prosperity as well as to your own Comfort & Security. *Suffe* ye then *the word of Exhortation* ; and let every one apply himself to the diligent performance of the Duty incumbent on him in his place.

I know indeed the *Discouragements*, that lie in the way, seem not a few, nor very small. They sail against Wind & Tide, that attempt to reduce the exorbitant power of Profaneness & Immorality, and to correct the Iniquity of the Times. They that zealously (tho' it be also with the utmost Meekness of Wisdom) reprove the works of darkness, shall be reviled precise Fools, or Hypocrites ; and be secretly laught at by the daring Heroes of Wickedness, or openly huffed & insulted by the more outrageous Sons of Violence. There are many scoffing *Ishmaels* cursing *Shimei's* in the World, from whom you must expect to meet with rude Affronts & unjust Measures, whatsoever Methods you take to prosecute the great Work of Reformation, whether more gentle or

vere. "Neither *John the Baptist*, by his rigid Austeri-
 "terity ; nor our *Blessed Saviour*, by his free and
 "obliging (tho' most innocent) Conversation, cou'd
 "escape the bitter Scoffs & Reproches of that wick-
 "ed and perverse *Generation of Vipers* they liv'd
 "amongst, who were always fastning their inve-
 "nom'd Teeth upon them.

BUT surely his Zele for GOD, and Love to his
 Country are very remiss, who will suffer himself to
 be flatter'd, flouted, or frighten'd out of his just and
 reasonable Duty ; and beaten off this great & noble
 Design of reforming a vitious Age ; which is so be-
 neficial to Mankind, and which every good Man is
 therefore call'd to engage in with zeale & courage.--
 O! where is your Love to CHRIST ? Where are
 your Bowels towards the Souls of Sinners ? Where
 is your public Spirit, and regard to the common
 Welfare & Safety, if some Difficulties, in the way
 of this blessed Undertaking, damp your Resolution,
 and prevent your warm and active Engagement in
 it ? What pusillanimous Souls they, who dare not
 appear in the Cause of GOD in evil times, and here-
 by approve themselves hearty Friends to their
 Country : but tamely yield to the Enemies of both,
 without ever regularly confronting them!---To ani-
 mate you, let me lay before you those Words of the
 Apostle, (1 Pet. 3. 13, 14.) *Who is He that will harm*
you, if ye be Followers of that which is good ? But and
if ye suffer for Righteousness sake, happy are ye : and
be not afraid of their Terrour, neither be troubled.
 Let me bring you that Exhortation of the Prophet,
 (Hag. 2. 4, 5. *Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel ; and*
be strong, O Jofhua ; and be strong all ye People of the
Land ;

Land ; and work : for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts : --- my spirit remaneth among you : fear ye not. If the Servants of GOD among us in every Order & Degree wou'd unite their active & zealous Efforts, and with Prudence, Fidelity & Constancy use their Power & Interest; to restrain Sin and promote Virtue, We might hope that a revolting People wou'd be reclaimed ; and so the dreadful Fruit of that desolating Vengeance, which seems to an eye of Reason hanging over our guilty Heads, prevented ; and the gracious Presence of GOD recover'd which in this dark day is very awfully withdrawn from us. — Let me then with all humble freedom and faithfulness call upon Christians of every Character among us, to do their utmost for the Reformation of those provoking Evils, which so abound in the Land. — A word of Exhortation this which (if I mistake not) will be voted a word in season, by all that have understanding in the Times ; but whether address'd by a Person not so suitable, must submit to the free Censure of others ; and shall not decline apprehended Duty for fear of unjust Reflections. It wou'd be proper here to consider distinctly what Duties lie upon the several Members of a Christian Community, in their different ranks, capacities and relations, in order to prevent the Increase of Sin, and serve the Support & Flourishing of Religion amongst them.

LET it then be a humble Address (in the first place) to all that are in Civil Authority, or entrusted with the Administration of Justice, in one degree and another. Honored Fathers, and Brethren, will you suffer me to be your humble, but faithful Minister

minister this day? May I put you in mind to be ready to every good Work, and call upon you to appear with greater Warmth & Vigour, in opposition to rampant Vice, and in vindication of despised Virtue and Religion? The Apostle pronounces the Magistrate a *Minister of GOD for Good*, to the Public: inasmuch as he is ordain'd a *Revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth Evil*; a *Terror* to evil Works, and an *Encourager* of them that do that which is good †. — GOD expects from you, that you be *active* in your several places to promote the *Publick* Tranquillity and Prosperity; and in order to this, that you faithfully use all your Ability and Interest to serve the Support and Progress of *Reformation*, and practical Godliness among us. GOD expects that you be *Patterns of good Works* in your own Lives; and that you be *Patrons* and *Promoters* of Religion & Virtue in others. GOD expects that you not only be strict *Observers*, but likewise faithfull *Guardians & Assertors* of his holy Laws (as well as the Laws of the Land) and that you be just *Animadvertisers* on the Transgressions of them, as far as your Authority extends, in your several Posts and Districts. — You have singular *Powers* and *Advantages* in your hands (which are so many Talents you are accountable for) that afford you special Opportunities to promote the good Work of Reformation among us. Your very *Example* carries with it Authority & attractive Influence. And then you have a *Coercive* Power, and can by the due ministration of Justice *compel* Men to cease to do Evil, when others can only *persuade* by the

† Rom. 13. 3, 4.

Terrors of the LORD. A great deal might every one in Authority do towards the desired Amendment of the Times, by a zealous prudent and impartial Execution of the Laws against Profaneness and Immorality; and truly if our Civil Rulers do not very vigorously engage in this Affair, 'tis to be fear'd others will but in vain urge & perswade to Reformation. ---- I know you can't *change* and renew the *Heart* of any, altho in truth you shou'd *propose* & *desire* this, in all your attempts for the restraint and reformation of Offenders ||. However, you can do much towards amending the *Lives* of many, which external Amendment (if general) wou'd by a natural and proper Efficiency prevent many Calamities, and produce those things that are necessary to our temporal Prosperity: and peradventure GOD wou'd turn from the Fierceness of his Anger. Thus; you can do a great deal (by the due Provision and careful Execution of wise & good Laws) to guard the first Table of the Divine Precepts, as well as the second: to reform the growing Neglect of GOD's Public Worship; to stop the Mouth of profane Swearers and Evil Speakers; to vindicate the Honor, and correct the criminal Violation of GOD's holy Sabbath; to suppress the visible Pride, notorious Idleness, Intemperance and Tavern haunting, Wantonness, and Unchastity; and to heal the scandalous Contentions among us: which are the reigning Evils of this unhappy day, do undermine the foundations of our public Peace, and threaten to bury us all (with the guilty Actors

|| See the Revd. Mr. Colman's Sermon on *Psal.* 51. 13. page 19. where this is urged on the Magistrate.

in a general Desolation, unless there be some reasonable Remedy.— Hear then, *Ye that tremble at the Commandment of the Lord, and let it be done according to the Law. Arise, for this matter belongeth unto you; we also will be with you: be of good Courage, and do it* *. It belongs to you to search out the Works of Darkness, and to punish haughty Sons of Wickedness: to countenance them that rebuke in the Gate, and to discipline with the Rod those that will not be won by the Word; by whose sins the Land is greatly defiled, and our holy LORD highly incensed against us. And he will be yet more dreadfully incensed, if the *Leaders* of this People do not stand up for GOD against the Evil-Doers, & tho'ro'ly execute Judgment. Isa. 59. 14, 15. *Justice standeth afar off; Truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea Truth faileth and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw it, and it displeased him, that there was no judgment.* "Sin is a publick Evil; and if Vice pass uncontrolled, Religion will soon be brought into Contempt, with your Authority; and then a Deluge of Miseries and Judgments will be the fatal Consequence." As then you wou'd not be instruments of our Ruin; as you wou'd approve your selves the Shields of the Earth, a Defense and Glory to us; as you wou'd answer the Oath of GOD which is upon you, and obtain Honour from the LORD; let us beseech you, SIRS, to do the utmost you can, in your respective places, with a resolute industry to discountenance Sin, and advance Reformation. Remember and imitate *Nehemiah*,

* Esai 10. 4.

that famous Reformer and excelling Ruler, who testified against those that bro't wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath, and *contended with the Nobles of Judah*, who connived at them. Remember *Job*, who *put on Righteousness*, and it clothed him: his Judgment was as a Robe and a Diadem. He was Eyes to the Blind, and Feet was he to the Lame: He was a Father to the Poor; and the Cause which he knew not, he searched out, and *he brake the jaws of the Wicked*, and pluckt the Spoil out of his mouth †. Remember how *Phinehas* in a holy Zele stood up and executed Judgment on the two Criminals in the very Act of Sin: by which means he turned away Wrath from the Children of Israel & stayed the Plague that was begun among them. By these Examples, let every one be awakened to put on Judgment, and cloth himself with Zele. Resolve *not to bear the Sword of Justice in vain*. Neglect not giving due Discipline, from a carnal Fear, at any time: but boldly interpose your Authority, without Connivence or Toleration, where the Honor of GOD, and the public Good call you to do your Office; crying to the LORD (with Nehemiah in a like case) to *strengthen your hands* and expostulating with your self, as he did, *Should such a man as I flee *?* — It was a pityfull Excuse out of the Mouth of a supreme Magistrate once in the neglect of his Duty, (1 Sam. 15. 24.) *I have sinned: for I have transgressed the Commandment of the Lord; because I feared the People:* --- pretty agreeable to Pilate's Pretence for condemning the Just One, Luk. 23. 23, 24. *They were instant with loud*

† Job 29. 14, 17. || Num 25. * Neh. 6. 9, 11.

Voices, requiring that he might be crucified: --- and Pilate gave Sentence, that it should be as they required.--- Remember Jehoshaphat's solemn Charge and Counsil to his Judges, 2 Chron. 19. 9, &c. He charged them saying, *Thus shall ye do in the Fear of the Lord, faithfully, and with a perfect Heart: And what Cause soever shall come to you of your Brethren,--- ye shall warn them that they trespass not against the Lord, and so wrath come upon you, and upon your Brethren: this do ye and ye shall not trespass.--- Deal courageously, and the Lord shall be with the Good.*

--- Hear also the Exhortation that speaks to you in Amos 5. 15. *Hate the Evil, and love the Good, & establish Judgment in the Gate: it may be the Lord God of Hosts will be gracious to the Remnant of Joseph.*

BUT in the next Place,---

THE Ministers of the Gospel are under very special Obligations, by the awful Charges of GOD upon them, as well as by their own solemn Engagements, to put forth their most diligent Endeavors in promoting the Conversion and Reformation of Sinners. The sacred and the civil Orders must conspire, and conjoyn Heart and Hand (according to the various ways of their Administration and Influence) for the Support and Propagation of Religion; as when Zerubbabel and others began to build the House of the LORD at Jerusalem, there were with them the Prophets of God helping them, Ezra 5. 2. Thus, our Prophet Jeremiah was in his early days raised up very seasonably to assist, and encourage Young King Josiah in that good work of Reformation which he had enter'd upon. As it is an Encouragement to Ministers to be countenanced and protected by such

such pious Magistrates as *Jessiah* was: So it is a great Help to *Magistrates* in any Attempts of Reformation to be advised & animated, and to have a great Deal of their Work done for them, by such faithful zealous Ministers as *Jeremiah* was ||. With what glorious Success (thru the Blessing of CHRIST) might we hope the Work of Reformation wou'd be carry'd on, by the united Labours of a wise and zealous Magistracy and Ministry! The one reaches the *outer Man*, t'other the *inner Man*: Both combined wou'd soon bring Religion into deserved Credit; but make Vice and Impiety sneak into a corner, and hide it's head in darkness.--- *Having then Gifts and Offices, differing according to the Grace that is given to us, whether Civil or Ecclesiastical, let us wait on our Ministering: He that teacheth, on Teaching; He that exhorteth, on Exhortation; and he that ruleth, let him do it with Diligence †. Whatsoever is commanded by the God of Heaven, let it be diligently done, for the House of the God of Heaven *.* For why should there be Wrath against the Land?

MINISTERS bear a public Character; and we owe this duty to the Public, to wish and endeavor it's Prosperity in every proper way: also the Office we sustain is of *common* Concernment, and has an immediate Reference to the general Good. We are peculiarly oblig'd to be under the Rule & Conduct of a Public Spirit. Ministers are as *Luminaries* in a public Orb; and shou'd study to communicate Light and Heat to all about them. An idle, or narrow-spirited, self-seeking Minister is a Contradiction in

|| Mr. Henry's Note on Jer. 1. 2. † Rom. 12. 6.... 8.
* Ezra 7. 13.

terms. It most highly becomes and behoves the LORD's Ministers to be very solicitous for the Public Weal of GOD's People every where, but especially for the Good of the Places where they live. We shou'd rejoice in the Prosperity of a People, and tenderly sympathize with them in a day of Adversity. We shou'd lay to heart the Frowns of Heaven, and mourn the Sins of a backsliding Generation: grieved to behold our People, pining away in their Iniquities, and perishing under the Judgments of a provoked GOD. And from a deep Compassion to them (as well as in Fidelity to CHRIST, whose we are, and whom we serve) we shou'd employ all our Tho'ts, and Cares, and contribute our utmost Assistences to save a People consuming under GOD's holy Wrath. GOD hath placed Ministers as *Watch-men* upon the walls of *Jerusalem*; and requires that we set our selves to search into the Grounds of his Contending with the Inhabitants of the Land; and diligently inquire what meaneth the Heat of his Anger; that we study to find out and bear faithfull Testimony against the Sins of the Times; that with all boldness & plainness we declare the whole Counsil of GOD, and impartially exercise the holy Discipline of his House towards Offenders. Let us hear the *Apostle's* Charges to young *Timothy*;--These things command and teach: let no man despise thy Youth†. Them that Sin, rebuke before all, that others also may fear. I charge thee before GOD and the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the elect Angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another,

† 1 Tim. 4. 11, 12.

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doing nothing by partiality.— Neither be partakers of other men's sins : keep thy self pure *. I charge thee before GOD, and the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing & his kingdom : Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine †.—Let us hear also what the LORD said, to young *Jeremiah* ;—Say not, I am a Child for thou shalt go to all, to whom I shall send thee and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their face ; for I am with thee, saith the LORD ‖. He that hath my word, let him speak my work faithfully ‡.—In like manner the LORD spake to *Ezekiel*, saying, Thou, Son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, tho' briers and thorns be with thee, and thou shalt dwell among Scorpions : be not afraid of their words, nor dismayed at their looks, tho' they be of a rebellious house. And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious House *.—An Expositor (††) on the last Place has these Notes ; “ Those that will do any thing to purpose in the Service of GOD, must not be afraid of the Face of Man ; for the *Fear of Men will bring a snare*, which will be very entangling to us in the Work of GOD.—“ The Untractableness and Unprofitableness of People under the Word is no good Reason why Ministers should

* 1 Tim. 5. 20, &c. † 2 Tim. 4. begin. ‖ Jer. 1. 7.

‡ Chap. 23. 28. * Ezek. 2. 6.—8. †† Mr. Henry.

leave off Preaching to them; nor must we decline an Opportunity by which Good *may be done*, tho we have a great deal of Reason to think no Good *will be done*. — “If Ministers, that are Reprovers by Office, connive at Sin, and indulge Sinners; either shew them not their Wickedness, or shew them not the fatal Consequences of it, for fear of displeasing them; They hereby make themselves Partakers of their Guilt, and are *rebellious* like them. If People will not do their Duty in *reforming*, yet let Ministers do theirs in *reproving*; and they will have the Comfort of it in the Reflection, whatever the Success be”: As that Prophet had, (Isa. 49. 4, 5.) *I have laboured in vain, yet surely my judgment is with the Lord. Though Israel be not gathered, yet I shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord.* And as the Apostles had, (2 Cor. 2. 14, 15.) *Now thanks be to God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ;—for we are unto God a sweet Savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish—.* So 1 Thes. 2. 2, &c. We were bold in our GOD to speak unto you the Gospel of GOD with much Contention, For our Exhortation was not of Deceit: — But as we were allowed of GOD to be put in Trust with the Gospel, even so we speak *not as pleasing Men*, but GOD, who trieth our Hearts. For neither at any time used we *flattering words*, as ye know, &c. — It is sadly true that Sinners love to hear *smooth things*, and hate him that *rebuketh in the Gate*: They abhor him that *speaketh uprightly*. And when the Prophets accommodate themselves to the evil *Humours* of a degenerate People, speak the *Deceits* of their

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2 Amos 5. 10.

own Heart, and do not cause *Israel* to hear the Words of the LORD; as the LORD is against such Prophets that thus smooth their tongues, so it is an awfull Sign of his *Departure* from such a People, & the hastning of destructive Vengeance upon them. But if GOD hath any *Reserves* of Benignity & Pity for them, He will raise up some that will dare to carry to 'em the most awfull Messages, the most unwelcome Tidings, and to *Preach the Preaching which he has bid them* whatever it be; not sparing any Pains; not sparing the greatest of Men; not sparing the most popular Vices.--- Thus must every one be temper'd and dispos'd, if he wou'd be found faithfull to GOD, to his own Soul, or to the Public Weal. We must be *bold in our GOD*, and not fear the Faces of Men: nor spare their Lusts in favour to their Persons, or from any sinister View whatsoever. Neither the Pride and Imperiousness of some, nor the Peevishness, Rage, and Rancour of others must break our Courage, cool our Zele, or slacken our Endeavours in the pursuit of a Design so really excellent in it self, and so abundantly beneficial to Mankind, as the Intention of recovering a revolted World to GOD and Goodness. We shou'd patiently *endure the Contradiction of Sinners*, as our blessed LORD has set us an Example: Yet we shou'd rather be animated by Discouragements & Oppositions; and in spite of all, with Patience, Alacrity, and Fidelity prosecute the Cause of GOD and the Public Interest: setting our faces as a flint and being full of Power and Judgment by the SPIRIT of the LORD; thô for our Faithfullness, Zele

and Activity we may by venomous Tongues be made the Subjects of impotent Raillery, be branded as the *Troublers of Israel*, and doom'd unprofitable Burdens of the Earth. But if this is to be vile, let us (with David) be *more vile than thus, and be base in our own fight* *. "In all our dealings with Men, let us be plain and faithfull: let us do all we can (and more than we do) if it be possible, to save a Generation from the wrath of GOD, and impending Calamities: Let us be still more plain, more particular, more serious [and zealous] in this great Work"†. Let us pursue that solemn Charge, (Jer. 15. 19.) *Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them.* Let us gird up our Loyns, and put on the whole Armour of GOD; not be slothfull in business, but fervent in Spirit, serving the LORD; warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom: being bold and resolute and strong in the LORD, though also humble and meek and wise; *of some having Compassion, and pulling others out of the Fire.* If any go on still in their Trespases, and hate to be reformed; spurn at all the endearing methods of Persuasion, yea laugh at the shaking of the Spear, and account our most awfull spiritual Weapons but as Stubble; yet let them know that the Prophets of God have been among them. Let us not shun to declare unto them all the Counsel of God; being instant in season, and out of season; Exhorting and rebuking with all Authority; and ceasing not to warn every one night & day with tears, if by any means we may save some; at least deliver our own souls,

* 2 Sam. 6. 22. † Mr. Willard's Election Sermon.

and keep them pure from the blood all men.—Now to quicken ourselves to such Fidelity & Diligence, let us labour to get our Hearts inspired with a greater Hatred of Sin; with a more tender Pity towards the Souls of Sinners; with a more generous Ardour for the public Good; with a more confirmed Hope in the Mercy of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and a more inflamed Zele for the Glory of GOD.— I shall only add under this head; I wou'd not be mistaken, as to what I have said here with respect to those in the Ministry: it is not design'd to instruct, excite or reprove my reverend Fathers and Brethren, so much as to admonish and quicken my self; and to let the People know what is the Duty of Ministers: that seeing what Obligations lie upon us to be faithfull & open-hearted in our dealing with them; in this dark and degenerate day, they may not so angrily resent the performance of our Duty; as they are apt to do.

BUT now I proceed to offer a word or two to Christians who move in a *less public* Sphere. Thus, I might call upon the *Teachers of our Schools*, the Tutors of our Children & Youth, to use their utmost Endeavors for the propagating of Religion among the rising Generation. You have peculiar Advantages in your hands for this End; which GOD and the Public justly expect you improve with the greatest Care & Diligence. You shou'd use your Authority in reforming the Manners of vitious Youths & Children. You shou'd use your Knowledge & Learning in giving them seasonable Instructions about their Spiritual Concerns, and opening to them sacred Doctrines, in the most familiar manner. You

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shou'd use your utmost Wisdom and Care to affect their Consciences with Divine Truths, and bring them to reverence all serious Dictates from within; to study and conform to the practical Lessons of the Gospel; to love and practise secret Prayer, Reading GOD's Word daily, &c. You shou'd inquire into the State of their Souls, and watch over their Ways: frown on the first appearances of Evil and check the beginnings of Sin; but cherish and encourage every hopefull Symptom. You shou'd labour to mortify betimes their youthfull Lusts; to restrain their exorbitant Passions, & rectify all irregular Affections; "to subdue every *proud*, ambitious, and haughty Spirit at it's first appearance; to reduce every *peevish* and discontented Humour, to correct every *selfish* niggardly Temper; to civilize & reform every *ungenerous* ingratefull Disposition; and to kill all the seeds of Vice: On the Contrary endeavor to implant good and sober Principles in their young minds; to bring them into the Liking and Practice of all Theological & Moral Virtues; and form their Souls to worthy generous Designs, and excellent Tempers; that they may be "usefull Citizens of this World, and hopefull Candidates for Heaven". In thus doing, you'll show a just Concern for the Good of both the present and succeeding Generations; and such a public Spirit, well becomes your public Capacity.

FURTHER, I might direct the Exhortation to *Heads of Families*, and call upon them to walk within their Houses (like *David*) with a perfect heart, and like *Abraham* to command their Children and Household to serve the LORD. Families

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are the first *Source* and *Seminary* of the Church & Common-Wealth: and upon the well-ordering of them does not a little depend the Flourishing and Prosperity of both. The Neglect of Domestic Government and Household-Piety is the Rise and Spring of innumerable Mischiefs to a People; and speaks all Religion to be in a decaying expiring posture among them. This is the great Wound & Disease of this Place & People, that *Family-Worship* and Discipline is shamefully *cast off* by multitudes, and so *remissly* attended by the Generality; that there are so many Tabernacles of Iniquity, so many Houses of the Wicked among us, wherein GOD is not served; and that among the Godly themselves, there is such a lamentable Decay of Family-Religion in all the parts of it. *Family-Prayer* is too much degenerated into a Formality: *Family-Instruction* is not duely upheld: and *Family-Government* seems to be almost lost and perisht out of the Earth. Children do not honour their Parents, and Servants do not fear their Masters; nor do Heads of Families take regular Methods to maintain their Authority, and govern their respective Charges, according to the Will of GOD. They don't bring up their Children in the *Admonition* of the L O R D, nor *command* their Household to keep his ways; but a criminal Indulgence reigns & prevales. — Now these Family-Disorders are very provoking to GOD, the G O D of all the Families of the Earth, who looks down from his holy Habitation, into the Habitations of Men, and beholds all that is amiss in our Houses. *For these things* among others, Divine Justice has lately been visiting us with corrective

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Dispensations. GOD has been distributing Sorrows in his Anger, and smiting our Houses with the Rod. How many are there among us that may take up the Lamentation, and say, *I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his Wrath: my Virgins and my young men are fallen: the Children and the sucklings thou hast slain them in the day of thine Anger. Thou hast called as in a solemn day my Terrors round about, and hast compassed me with Gall, and Travel; thou hast covered me with ashes, and made my Chain heavy. Thou hast pulled me in pieces, and made me Desolate.* — How great have our Family-Distresses been of late, by reason of the Contagious Sickness spreading so swiftly thro' the Town, and so fatally? The Slain of the LORD have been many: GOD hath been breaking our Families with great Breaches, with very grievous Blows. And has he not been herein *pouring our Wickedness* upon us? Have not our Family-Sins drawn down these Effects of his holy Vengeance on our guilty Heads? Shou'd we not *hearken to the voice of his Rod*, which loudly calls upon us to put away all Iniquity far from our Tabernacles? And since he has been mixing so much Mercy with his Judgments however severe, shou'd we not by his Goodness be led to Repentance? After all that is come upon us for our evil Deeds, if we go on to break his Commandments, may we not justly fear, that GOD in his holy Providence will renew the Tokens of his Displeasure? If young People, like the Sons of good old Eli, make themselves vile, and their Parents, like him, restrain them not; what can they expect but to be punished like him, and

and to have their *Houses* visited with still heavier Judgments? Wherefore, if you would not drink yet deeper of the Cup of Divine Fury, & when you are come out of one Fire, go into another which shall devour you, Be *zealous & repent*. Get your Hearts and Houses purged from Sin, that abominable thing, which GOD's Soul hateth. Let this *Family-Reformation* be vigorously and generally engag'd in; and it will open to us the fairest Prospects of a public Reformation. For the most zealous Attempts of *Magistrates, Ministers, Tutors &c.* towards the Reformation of Manners, particularly among the rising Generation, will be but of little Significancy, without the concurrent Endeavors of *Heads of Families*. The work must begin and take it's Rise *here*. Salt must be first cast into these little Springs; else the waters in general are not like to be healed. Let every Parent and Master then take up *Joshua's* pious Resolution, (*Josh. 24. 15.*) *As for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord ---* And that of *David* (*Psal. 101. 2, &c.*) *I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before mine Eyes. I will not know a wicked Person. Whoso privily slandereth his neighbor, him will I cut off from my Family and Employ. He that worketh Deceit, shall not dwell within my house, &c.* Let every one resolve upon and set about Reforming his own House, keep up a strict Discipline there, and diligently use the Influence and Authority he has over his Children & Servants to engage them in a real Love and Obedience to the Law of the LORD. This is the way to form and fit them to be Blessings to the Public, in their

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day and generation; this is an excellent Medium to revive and propagate Religion in the Land; and consequently to regain the lost Presence and Favour of GOD, and secure the same to rising Posterity: which (methinks) shou'd be every one's solicitous Care and Ambition.

NOW in the last place, I come to speak unto Christians at large, to all Professors of Religion consider'd in a private Capacity. Every one of the meanest Rank and lowest Circumstances in the World, has some Occasions and Opportunities to promote and strengthen the Interests of Religion; and in his place shou'd lend a helping Hand, for this Purpose. Christians in private (as well as those in public) Stations, are indispensably oblig'd, for the honor of GOD and the general Good, each of them in their respective places, to be busy and intent in the Cause of Reformation. This is incumbent on you as *Christians*, & as *Subjects*; as Members of the Church, and as Members of the Common Wealth. A Regard to the Good of the World, to the Safety and Prosperity of the Land, the Town, and Neighborhood where you dwell, shou'd influence you to do your utmost for the averting and appeasing of GOD's righteous Anger, and by Consequence for the suppressing those Sins, which have inflamed the Divine Displeasure against us.--- You must not go about to *shift off* from your selves this Work of Reformation, as if it belong'd only to Magistrates, Ministers, and other Authorities. No, it shou'd be every single Person's Concern. It is a common Duty, and universally obliging. Some indeed have greater Advantages than others. How-

ever, let your sphere of Activity be never so small, and your Opportunities never so few; yet you are *not without* your Opportunities. — The least Star has it's Light; the meanest Member, it's use. There are various Ways, in which private Christians may display their zeale for Religion, and minister to it's Support & Increase. Thus, You may contribute not a little to serve the Design of Reformation, as by your fervent Prayers, so by a bright *Example* of all Virtue & Goodness. *Let your Light then so shine before others, that they seeing your good Works, may likewise be induced to glorify G O D.* — You may also do good by *serious Discourse* in your friendly Converses with others. Wherefore let your *Speech* be always with Grace, seasoned with Salt, and good to the use of godly edifying: such as may manifest grace in him that speaks, & minister Grace to him that hears. — Again, You may be serviceable, by *brotherly Watch* over your Fellow Christians, and faithful attending the several Duties, which Church-Order doth require at your hands. 1 Thes. 5. 14. *Now we exhort you, Brethren, Warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, &c.* Heb. 3. 13. *Exhort one another daily while it is called, To day, lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of Sin.* Tit. 2. 1, 3. *Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine; — that the aged Women be teachers of good Things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, &c.* How narrow and inferiour soever your sphere is, undoubtedly there are some within it, some Relatives or Acquaintance, that you may use a Freedom with, who need your Counsils, Cautions, Admonitions, and the like; which you should

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be ready to dispense unto them, as the Case may require. — Moreover, You may do much Service by making prudent & seasonable *Informations* or *Complaints* to Authority against open & daring Offenders. You shou'd call for Civil Justice, to be done upon criminal Delinquents; and for Ecclesiastical Discipline to be exercised upon scandalous Impenitents. If it be an Iniquity to be punish'd by the Judges, a Sin that exposes to *Temporal* Corrections, You must inform the Magistrate; *Go and tell Moses of it*, as they, *Lev. 24. 11*. Or, if it be an offence that exposes to *Spiritual* Censures, *Go tell it unto the Church*, as our Saviour directs, *Matth. 18. 17*. This you must do, if you wou'd not partake of other mens sins & plagues. *Deut. 13. 6. &c. If thy Brother, or thy Son, or thy Daughter, or the Wife of thy Bosom, or thy Friend which is as thine own Soul offend, thine eye shall not pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him. And all Israel shall hear & fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness.* To inform Authority is the way to wash your own hands from the Guilt; and to put away the Evil from the Community, if Justice be duly administer'd. As then you would be just to your own Souls, and true to the Public Interest, you must be faithful in this Matter; and especially are you called to be so, in this time of prevailing Iniquity. — In a word, You must *rejoyce in Acts of Justice*, against provoking Evils among us; thankfully resent the holy Zele & faithful Service of Pious Rulers, Ministers, & Tutors; and do all you can, to encourage their hearts, and strengthen their hands in their Work. Approve the laudable Endeavours.

of such as are diligent & faithful in their respective Trusts : And what they do for the honour of GOD, and for the welfare of this People, let it be *accepted always with all thankfulness* by you, *as becometh Saints*. Don't cherish a *penurious* Spirit, or indulge *querulous* Behaviours towards them. Don't play the *Busy Body* in other men's matters, either by words or actions : nor by irregular Excursions from your proper Line of private Duty, make a breach on public Order, and juggle with others, regularly moving in their appointed Spheres. The wild Zele of pragmatistical restless Spirits is one of the greatest Enemies to the desired Reformation, & tends to produce inconceivable Mischiefs. They are not the best Reformers, that by an envious or over-officious Zele are frequently transported out of their proper Post into the Province of others ; undertaking the actual Management of Work that belongs not to them, or setting up for Inspectors, & Censors of others Managements, & making critical Remarks & perverse Comments on all that is said or done by the Servants of the Public. " Those are not the best Reformers, that " make the most tragical Outcries against the *Apostasy* of the Times, & are always making Invectives " against these or those, as the only *Authors* of it : & " in the mean time consider not what hand they " *themselves* have had in the prevailing Disorders : " nor what they can do in *their own place* to bring " things under a better Regulation. *Reformation* will " *never be carry'd on by popular Clamours*, or the ungovern'd Emotions of an illegitimate Zele : But by " every man's keeping to his *own post*, & there regulating what he has advantage for. Every man must

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“first reform himself, his Family; & then do all that he may regularly in his sphere to promote this Work in those about him” ||: without *interfering* with others in their just & proper motions; without *envying* the dignity of Superiours, or uncharitably *reflecting* on the fidelity of those that sit at Helm. It was a happy day in Israel, when the People took a thankful notice of what Good David did; and whatsoever the King did, it pleased all the People. It was a good Time, when there were of the Heads of Issachar, Men that had understanding of the Times, to know what Israel ought to do; & all their Brethren were at their Commandment. But it was an unhappy Time, when the People in the Wilderness murmured against Moses the Ruler, & against Aaron the Priest; & found fault with almost all their Conduct & Administrations. Such a Spirit reigning, is one of the most threatening Symptoms on a People. O let not this evil Frame be found among US. And if there be any that indulge themselves in it, I wish that all their Complaints were turned into Praises for the good, & Prayers for the bad. Observe the Apostle's Direction, (1 Tim. 2. begin.) I exhort therefore that first of all Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, & giving of Thanks be made for all men: for Kings, & for all that are in Authority; that (under them) we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness & honesty. For this is good & acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour. Take this method: & who knows how far the Prayers of the Righteous may prevale to reform a degenerate Magistracy & Ministry, if they must be

|| The late Rd. Mr. Pemberton's excellent Discourse, entitul'd, The Christian fixed in his Post. Page 29,

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stigmatiz'd as such? O set your selves to pray down a blessed Effusion of the holy Spirit; that the work of Grace may be revived on the hearts of GOD's Children & Servants, in Places of Public Trust; that they may be inspirited to serve their Generation with better Fidelity, with greater Industry, & the wisest Application of all their Powers. *Brethren, Pray for us: for we trust we have a good Conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. But We beseech you the rather to do this* † *at this time, because our Work is now peculiarly great & difficult, our strength is small, & an uncommon day of Temptation seems to be before us. Now therefore I beseech you, Brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, & for the Love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with us in prayers to God for us* ||.—They that can do little or nothing in an active way towards the desired Reformation, may thus help together by Prayer for us *. They that can do nothing further towards the preventing of Sin, may stand in the Breach, and weep in secret Places, and shine down the works of darkness by the Light of an holy Example.

AND now upon the whole; Did all the Servants of GOD, as well public Persons, as private People, unite their zealous Attempts, in a regular discharge of the Duties respectly incumbent on them, together with their fervent Supplications at the Throne of Grace; we might hope quickly to see a happy Change of the Times, a blessed Resurrection of practical Christianity, with the joyfull Return of GOD's favourable Presence.

† Heb. 13. 18, 19. || Rom. 15. 30. * 2 Cor. 1. 11.

I shall here crave Leave to add a few Sentences borrow'd, and then conclude this long Discourse. "Here is a wide and noble Field (says one) before us, for all good Men to shew their Zele, and exert themselves in : and cou'd but all good People so far agree, as to lay down their undue Heats and Animosities ; and to let their Warmth and Zele run together for a while, in this Channel ; to imploy their Prayers, their Labours, their Parts, and their Purses, to extirpate that Impiety and Profaneness, which reigns amongst us, and is the occasion of separating the Favour and gracious Presence of GOD from us ; who (though He may bear for a while in expectation of our Amendment) can never delight to do good to a rebellious and impenitent People : we need not doubt when we have thus made *our Peace with GOD*, He will heal our Divisions among our selves (which probably are a just Judgment of GOD upon us for our other Sins, one of the bitter Fruits of that Immorality, Unbelief and Contempt of the Gospel, which first took Root amongst us) and incline our hearts to *Peace one with another.* 10 MR 53

"LET me tell you (says an eminent Divine of our own ||) that for the *Divisions of Reuben there are great Searchings of Heart.* Those Evil Surmisings and uncharitable Jealousies one of another ; those Aspersions cast one upon another, and upon some of the best Friends of our Zion ; [those Strifes and Contentions among us, in Towns, Churches, Families, &c.] are very provoking to GOD, and like to be ruining to our selves. See, *Hos. 10. 2. Gal. 5. 15. Jam. 3. 15, 16.* Our safety is only in *Unity* : Our Security in being one for GOD, one with CHRIST, and one among our selves. O let us consider how little GOD's Work goes forward, and how his Glory

suffers, while men spend their little Zele, in Oppositions & Invectives one against another. This picketh out the Cement, and crumbles away the Mortar, which is the Strength of the Building; and when gone, with what ease may it be made to fall? To remedy this, Put on Charity, Brotherly Love, & Christian Forbearance. There are enough abroad, that watch for our Halting; we need not lay open one another's Infirmities. Devouring Beasts enough there are, which with open mouths, wait to make a Prey of us". — 'Tis Pity, we shou'd destroy our selves. As we love the Peace of our Jerusalem, let all Bitterness, and Wrath, and Clamour, and Evil-speaking be put away from us, with all Malice: and let us be kind one to another, tender-hearted, pityfull, and courteous; having the same Love, being of one Accord, of one Mind: Seeking the Things, which make for Peace, and whereby one may edify another: Following Peace with all Men, and Holiness; without which no Man shall see the L O R D. Thus shall the Breaches in our Hedge be made up: Otherwise they will be but widen'd and aggravated. Men of a censorious dividing Spirit, how specious soever their Pretences of Zele for Reformation may be, are no real Friends to this Cause; but it's most effectual Adversaries. *Unpeaceable, Party-spirited Reformers, are dangerous Coals, fitt'd to kindle a destroying Fire in a Place.* The Spirit of holy Zele is a Spirit of holy Love, and of Meekness, and of a sound Mind. O that such a Spirit might rest upon us! May the G O D of Peace, who maketh Men to be of one mind in an house, unite us all in the Bonds of TRUTH, HOLINESS & LOVE! May He give us ONE HEART & ONE WAY, that we may fear him for ever, for the good of our selves, and of our Children after us. May he turn away his Wrath from us, and rejoyce over us to do us good, with his whole Soul. May he purge away our Dross, and take away all our Tin! May he restore us Rulers, as at the First: Counsellors and Judges as at the Beginning; make our Officers Peace, and our Extractors Righteousness! May he purify the Sons of Levi, and clothe his Priests with Salvation! May Zion be redeemed with Judgment, and her Converts shout aloud for Joy! May our Jerusalem be call'd, The City of Righteousness, the faithful City, a City that is Compact together, and fely framed: The Habitation of Holiness, The Perfection of Beauty, and Joy of all the Earth! May Glory dwell in our Land, a Peace be upon Israel, and the whole Earth be filled with Knowledge of J E S U S C H R I S T. *A M E N.*

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